



ENGLISH IDYLLS AND OTHER POEMS



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TORONTO

# Tennyson's English Idylls and Other Poems

*WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY*

J. H. Fowler, M.A.

Assistant Master at Clifton College;  
Editor of Palgrave's "Golden Treasury," Books I., III., IV.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a story of R. L. Stevenson's of a young man in a mediaeval French town who takes refuge in a doorway on a dark night. The door against which he presses gives way and he enters, and before he can realise what has happened, or whether it is not all a dream, he finds himself caught up into the life that is going on behind the door, not merely a spectator of it, but himself an actor in the drama, his whole course of life henceforward changed by what had seemed a trivial accident.

So it may happen, once and again, to one who has been reading books because they were set him as tasks to find that something strange has happened, how or why or when precisely he knows not. But he has passed through the door that shut him out from the poets, and henceforth he sees no more the dull lifeless print, the lesson that was a weariness and a vexation, "a tale of little meaning though the words be strong," but words instead that are the speech of friends, a world that is full of colour and music, a life that is intensely real and that is his to share and to enjoy. Henceforward he feels as if he had seen and known the heroes of old time—had witnessed the parting of Hector and Andromache, had seen the home-coming of Ulysses and



the drawing of the terrible bow, had sought with Aeneas for the gleam of the golden bough in the forest, and passed with him into the dim underworld and heard afar the roar of Acheron. And then a new gratitude comes into his heart to the poets who have shown him these things. He feels as Dante in the Middle Ages felt towards Virgil; and he wonders, perhaps, how he could ever have scribbled or drawn pictures in the margin of so noble a book; or how he could have wished to mutilate an immortal verse by breaking off repetition punctually at the twentieth line when there was not even the shabby subterfuge of a comma; or how he could have conceived it a joy by any diplomacy to evade an hour's reading of literature.

So may it happen to some of the readers of this book!

For poetry is not a matter of words sawn into lines of equal length, as some vainly imagine, nor a jingle of repeated sounds: it is the revelation of a new heaven and a new earth. The poet at his best is what Virgil called him—*vates*, the seer, the prophet. His function is partly to awaken our minds from "the lethargy of custom" to enable us to understand better and feel more deeply the beauty of the world that lies around us and the joy and sorrow of the things that are happening before our sight, partly to lift us to a level above the vanities and trivialities of the merely personal; or, best of all, to open our eyes that we may behold a spiritual world all round us, as real and close to us as the material world in which so many are content to live.

Does this seem too ambitious a view to take?

Let us then begin by reading the poems simply as stories, not troubling our selves about their form.

Having done that, let us notice how much more they are than stories. When Tennyson called them "idylls," "little pictures," he used the Greek word used by Theocritus two thousand years ago to describe his poems of Sicilian shepherd life. The word admirably expresses what Tennyson attempted in these poems—to give us in each case *a sketch from life with a background of landscape*. Whether he brings before us King Arthur, wounded to death, lying in "A broken chancel with a broken cross" on "a dark strait of narrow land," with the ocean on one side and "a great water" on the other and the moon shining down upon him and Sir Bedivere at his side; or the Gardener's Daughter holding the rose-bush to fix it back against the porch; or St. Simeon patient on his pillar, high "betwixt the meadow and the cloud"; or Amy's lover watching the storm come over the dreary moorland and pass "roaring seaward"—always we seem to see his characters set in an appropriate landscape, with something in that landscape, or in the aspect of it on that particular day, answering to or (it may be) contrasted with their feelings.

Next, we may notice how often we have a whole picture concentrated into a very few lines; Sir Galahad in the Tournament—

"The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
The horse and rider reel" (p. 86);

King Charles hiding in the oak-tree

"Till all the paths were dim,  
And far below the Roundhead rode,  
And humm'd a surly hymn" (p. 50);

the ship voyaging "across the boundless east" to

"Where those long swells of breaker sweep  
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove" (p. 106);

or how sometimes a single line enshrines an accurate touch of nature that fixes itself on the pleased memory:

"More black than ashbuds in the front of March" (p. 12);

"The lime, a summer home of murmurous wings" (p. 12);

or (in the description of sunrise),

"And beat the twilight into flakes of fire" (p. 58).

If we repeat such lines aloud, we shall soon begin to notice the part that melody plays in making them beautiful and unforgettable; how subtly alliteration is used—*i.e.* the repetition of similar sounds in the line, not initial letters of words merely—as in

"Bound by gold chains about the feet of God" (p. 9),

where *about* repeats the *bou* of *bound* and the *b* of *by*, of the *f* of *feet*, *God* the *d* of *bound* as well as the *g* and *d* of *gold*: how the changes are rung on the vowels, as in

"And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
Of onset" (p. 8),

or

"Among new men, strange faces, other minds" (p. 9);

how wonderfully the sound echoes the sense, as in

"jut: of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp smitten with the dint of armed heels" (p. 8),

or

"high above I heard them blast  
The steep steep-quarry, and the great echo flap  
And buffet round the hill, from bluff to bluff" (p. 55);

what a range of effects the metre can express, from the heavy spondees of

“And so strode back slow to the wounded King” (p. 5),  
to the rushing trochees and dactyls of

“Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
Half-invisible to the view,  
Wheeling with precipitate paces  
To the melody, till they flew” (p. 115).

Other things that may be suggested as worthy of study later on are :

(1) *The influence on Tennyson of earlier poets.* His *Morte d'Arthur* and *Ulysses* especially show the influence upon him of Homer and Virgil. The influence of Wordsworth (his *Excursion* and his *Michael*) and Southey (his *English Eclogues*) is strong in the simpler English Idylls ; the influence of Keats in *The Day-Dream* and *Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere*.

(2) *Tennyson's relation to his age.* This volume was published in 1842, five years after Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, and it is full of the hopes and fears and aspirations of that time ; the fear of Revolution—

“Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying  
fire” (p. 66) ;

the hope that the growth of commerce would also mean universal peace—

“Fly, happy happy sails, and bear the Press ;  
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross ;  
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward  
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,  
Enrich the markets of the golden year” (p. 54) ;

the conviction of the noblest hearts, in spite of the unsettling of old beliefs by the discoveries of science, that

“thro’ the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen’d with the process of the  
suns” (p. 66).

Lastly, if we feel—and we can hardly help feeling—that the poems in which Tennyson deals directly with his own age are not great in the sense or in the degree in which the *Morte d'Arthur* and the *Ulysses* are great, we shall do well to remember that few achievements in poetry are more difficult than this of lifting up into poetical atmosphere things vulgarised by all the prosaic associations of our daily life. Here too let us recognise that the poet is *vates*, seer and prophet; and be grateful to him when he sheds upon our path

“The light that never was on sea or land,  
The consecration and the poet’s dream.”

NOTE.—The Editor’s grateful thanks are due to his colleague, Mr. C. H. Spencee, for valuable criticisms and suggestions.

# ENGLISH IDYLLS AND OTHER POEMS

## I. THE EPIC

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—  
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,  
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held a talk,  
How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,  
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games  
In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out  
With cutting eights that day upon the pond, 10  
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,  
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard  
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
Now harping on the church-commissioners,  
Now hawking at Geology and schism ;  
Until I woke, and found him settled down  
Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world, 'at home was little left,  
And none abroad : there was no anchor, none, 20  
To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his hand  
On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by him.'  
'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-bowl.'  
'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that way  
At college : but another which you had,

I mean of verse (for so we held it then),  
 What came of that ? ' You know,' said Frank, ' he burnt  
 His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books'—  
 And then to me demanding why ? ' Oh, sir,  
 He thought that nothing new was said, or else 30  
 Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth  
 Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :  
 God knows : he has a mint of reasons : ask.  
 It pleased *me* well enough.' ' Nay, nay,' said Hall,  
 ' Why take the style of those heroic times ?  
 For nature brings not back the Mastodon,  
 Nor we those times ; and why should any man  
 Remodel models ? these twelve books of mine  
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,  
 Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.' ' But I,' 40  
 Said Franeis, ' pick'd the eleventh from this hearth  
 And have it : keep a thing, its use will come.  
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'  
 He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse  
 That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears ;  
 For I remember'd Everard's college fame  
 When we were Freshmen : then at my request  
 He brought it ; and the poet little urged,  
 But with some prelude of disparagement,  
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes, 50  
 Deep-chested music, and to this result.

## II. MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
 Among the mountains by the winter sea ;  
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
 Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,  
 King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep,  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,

Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land. 10  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep  
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,  
Walking about the gardens and the halls 20  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,—  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again  
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm 30  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king :  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known :  
But now delay not : take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere :  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus, 40  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.



Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept  
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down  
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock, 50  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift mind, 60  
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave ?  
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds, 70  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :  
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as heseem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :  
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.

Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing 80  
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud,

' And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth, 90  
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
What good should follow this, if this were done ?  
What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself ?  
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt ? but were this kept, 100  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, " King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."

So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much fame were lost.'

So spak he, clouded with his own conceit, 110  
And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily ;  
' What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me ! 120  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,  
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;  
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence : 130  
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,  
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand  
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,  
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,  
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter shoek 140  
By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :  
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ?' 150

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;  
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him 160  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :  
'My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.  
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere 170  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found not words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick !  
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.' 180  
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.  
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves

And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels— 190  
 And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
 And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
 Beneath them ; and descending they were ware  
 That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these  
 Threc Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose  
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
 And, as it were one voice an agony 200  
 Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
 All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
 Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'  
 And to the barge they came. There those three Queens  
 Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.  
 But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
 And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,  
 And call'd him by his name, complaining loud, 210  
 And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
 Striped with dark blood : for all his face was white  
 And colourless, and like the wither'd moon  
 Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;  
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
 Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls—  
 That made his forehead like a rising sun  
 High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust ;  
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.  
 So like a shatter'd column lay the King ; 221  
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,

From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance, 230  
And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
Such times have been not since the light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty world;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:  
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new, 240  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats 250  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)

To the island-valley of Avilion ;  
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow, 260  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies  
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
 Revolving many memories, till the hull 270  
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light, that long  
 Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell :  
 At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,  
 And waked with silence, grunted 'Good !' but we  
 Sat rapt : it was the tone with which he read—  
 Perhaps some modern touches here and there  
 Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—  
 Or else we loved the man, and prized his work ; 280  
 I know not : but we sitting, as I said,  
 The cock crew loud ; as at that time of year  
 The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :  
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,  
 'There now—that's nothing !' drew a little back,  
 And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,  
 That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue :  
 And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I seem'd  
 To sail with Arthur under looming shores,  
 Point after point ; till on to dawn, when dreams 290  
 Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
 To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,  
 There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore

King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
Of stateliest port ; and all the people cried,  
' Arthur is come again : he cannot die.'  
Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
Repeated—' Come again, and thrice as fair ;'  
And, further inland, voices echoed—' Come  
With all good things, and war shall be no more.' 300  
At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed  
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

## III. THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER ;

## OR, THE PICTURES

THIS morning is the morning of the day,  
When I and Eustace from the city went  
To see the Gardener's Daughter ; I and he,  
Brothers in Art ; a friendship so complete  
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew  
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules ;  
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.  
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws  
The greater to the lesser, long desired 10  
A certain miracle of symmetry,  
A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summ'd up and closed in little ;—Juliet, she  
So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she  
To me myself, for some three careless moons,  
The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing ! Know you not  
Such touches are but embassies of love,  
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found  
Empire for life ? but Eustace painted her,  
And said to me, she sitting with us then, 20



‘When will *you* paint like this?’ and I replied,  
 (My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)  
 ‘Tis not your work, but Love’s. Love, unperceived,  
 A more ideal Artist he than all,  
 Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes  
 Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair  
 More black than ashbuds in the front of March.’  
 And Juliet answer’d laughing, ‘Go and see  
 The Gardener’s daughter: trust me, after that,  
 You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece.’ 30  
 And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite  
 Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.  
 News from the humming city comes to it  
 In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;  
 And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear  
 The windy clanging of the minster clock;  
 Although between it and the garden lies  
 A league of grass, wash’d by a slow broad stream, 40  
 That, stirr’d with languid pulses of the oar,  
 Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
 Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
 Crown’d with the minster-towers.

The fields between  
 Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder’d kine,  
 And all about the large lime feathers low,  
 The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.  
 In that still place she, hoarded in herself,  
 Grew, seldom seen; not less among us lived  
 Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard 50  
 Of Rose, the Gardener’s daughter? Where was he,  
 So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
 At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
 That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,  
 So gross to express delight, in praise of her  
 Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,

And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
Would play with flying forms and images,  
Yet this is also true, that, long before 60  
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name  
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,  
That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,  
Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul ;  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm  
To one that travels quickly, made the air  
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,  
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream 70  
Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,  
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
For ever in itself the day we went  
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,  
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud  
Drew downward : but all else of heaven was pure  
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,  
And May with me from head to heel. And now, 80  
As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were  
The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,  
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these,)  
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,  
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,  
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,  
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods  
Came voices of the well-contented doves.  
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,  
But shook his song together as he near'd 90  
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,  
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills ;



Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering  
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist— 130  
Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering down,  
But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced  
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,  
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground !  
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd  
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,  
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,  
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast  
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,  
She stood, a sight to make an old man young. 140

So rapt, we near'd the house ; but she, a Rose  
In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,  
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd  
Into the world without ; till close at hand,  
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,  
This murmur broke the stillness of that air  
Which brooded round about her :

‘ Ah, one rose,

One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,  
Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips  
Less exquisite than thine.’

She look'd : but all 150  
Suffused with blushes—neither self-possess'd  
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,  
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,  
And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound  
Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips  
For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,  
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,  
In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,  
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there 160  
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star



Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
Danced into light, and died into the shade ;  
And each in passing touch'd with some new grace  
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day, 200  
Like one that never can be wholly known,  
Her beauty grew ; till Autumn brought an hour  
For Eustace, when I heard his deep 'I will,'  
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold  
From thence thro' all the worlds : but I rose up  
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes  
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd  
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,  
Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the third, 210  
Between us, in the circle of his arms  
Enwound us both ; and over many a range  
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,  
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
Reveal'd their shining windows : from them clash'd  
The bells ; we listen'd ; with the time we play'd,  
We spoke of other things ; we coursed about  
The subject most at heart, more near and near,  
Like doves about a dovecot, wheeling round  
The central wish, until we settled there. 220

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,  
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,  
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,  
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved ;  
And in that time and place she answer'd me,  
And in the compass of three little words,  
More musical than ever came in one,  
The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
Made me most happy, faltering, 'I am thine. 230

Shall I cease here ? Is this enough to say  
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,

By its own energy fulfill'd itself,  
 Merged in completion? Would you learn at full  
 How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades  
 Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed  
 I had not staid so long to tell you all,  
 But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes  
 Holding the folded annals of my youth;  
 And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,  
 And with a flying finger swept my lips, 241  
 And spake, 'Be wise: not easily forgiven  
 Are those, who setting wide the doors that bar  
 The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
 Let in the day.' Here, then, my words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—  
 Of that which came between, more sweet than each,  
 In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves  
 That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs  
 Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance, 250  
 Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell  
 Of difference, reconciliation, pledges given,  
 And vows, where there was never need of vows,  
 And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap  
 Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above  
 The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale  
 Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;  
 Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,  
 Spread the light haze along the river-shores,  
 And in the hollows; or as once we met 260  
 Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering rain  
 Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,  
 And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have been intent  
 On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds  
 May not be dwelt on by the common day.  
 This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul;  
 Make thine heart ready with thine eyes: the time

Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,

As I beheld her ere she knew my heart, 270  
My first, last love ; the idol of my youth,  
The darling of my manhood, and, alas !  
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

#### IV. DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode  
William and Dora. William was his son,  
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,  
And often thought, 'I'll make them man and wife.'  
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
And yearn'd towards William ; but the youth, because  
He had been always with her in the house,  
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day

When Allan call'd his son, and said, 'My son :  
I married late, but I would wish to see 10  
My grandchild on my knees before I die :  
And I have set my heart upon a match.  
Now therefore look to Dora ; she is well  
To look to ; thrifty too beyond her age.  
She is my brother's daughter : he and I  
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died  
In foreign lands ; but for his sake I bred  
His daughter Dora : take her for your wife ;  
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,  
For many years.' But William answer'd short ; 20  
'I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,  
I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man  
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said :  
'You will not, boy ! you dare to answer thus !  
But in my time a father's word was law,  
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it ;



Consider, William : take a month to think,  
And let me have an answer to my wish ;  
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,  
And never more darken my doors again.' 30  
But William answer'd madly ; bit his lips,  
And broke away. The more he look'd at her  
The less he liked her ; and his ways were harsh ;  
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before  
The month was out he left his father's house,  
And hired himself to work within the fields ;  
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed  
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd  
His niece and said : ' My girl, I love you well ; 40  
But if you speak with him that was my son,  
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,  
My home is none of yours. My will is law.'  
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,  
' It cannot be : my uncle's mind will change !'

And days went on, and there was born a boy  
To William ; then distresses came on him ;  
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,  
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.  
But Dora stored what little she could save, 50  
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know  
Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought  
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said :

' I have obey'd my uncle until now,  
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me  
This evil came on William at the first.  
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone, 60  
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,  
And for this orphan, I am come to you :

You know there has not been for these five years  
So full a harvest : let me take the boy,  
And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
Among the wheat ; that when his heart is glad  
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone.'

And Dora took the child, and went her way  
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound 70  
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.  
Far off the farmer came into the field  
And spied her not ; for none of all his men  
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;  
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,  
But her heart fail'd her ; and the reapers reap'd,  
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took  
The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;  
And made a little wreath of all the flowers 80  
That grew about, and tied it round his hat  
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.  
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field  
He spied her, and he left his men at work,  
And came and said : ' Where were you yesterday ?  
Whose child is that ? What are you doing here ?'  
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
And answer'd softly, ' This is William's child !'  
' And did I not,' said Allan, ' did I not  
Forbid you, Dora ?' Dora said again : 90  
' Do with me as you will, but take the child,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone !'  
And Allan said, ' I see it is a trick  
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
I must be taught my duty, and by you !  
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared  
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy ;  
But go you hence, and never see me more.'

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud  
 And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell 100  
 At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,  
 And the boy's cry came to her from the field,  
 More and more distant. She bow'd down her head  
 Remembering the day when first she came,  
 And all the things that had been. She bow'd down  
 And wept in secret ; and the reapers reap'd,  
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood  
 Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
 Was not with Dora. She broke out with praise 110  
 To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.  
 And Dora said, ' My uncle took the boy ;  
 But, Mary, let me live and work with you :  
 He says that he will never see me more.'  
 Then answer'd Mary, ' This shall never be,  
 That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself :  
 And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,  
 For he will teach him hardness, and to slight  
 His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,  
 And I will have my boy, and bring him home ; 120  
 And I will beg of him to take thee back :  
 But if he will not take thee back again,  
 Then thou and I will live within one house,  
 And work for William's child, until he grows  
 Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd  
 Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.  
 The door was off the latch : they peep'd, and saw  
 The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,  
 Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,  
 And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks, 130  
 Like one that loved him : and the lad stretch'd out  
 And babbled for the golden seal, that hung  
 From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.

Then they came in : but when the boy beheld  
His mother, he cried out to come to her :  
And Allan set him down, and Mary said :

‘O Father !—if you let me call you so—  
I never came a-begging for myself,  
Or William, or this child ; but now I come  
For Dora : take her back ; she loves you well. 140  
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace  
With all men ; for I ask’d him, and he said,  
He could not ever rue his marrying me—  
I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he said  
That he was wrong to cross his father thus :  
“God bless him !” he said, “and may he never know  
The troubles I have gone thro’ !” Then he turn’d  
His face and pass’d—unhappy that I am !  
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you  
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight 150  
His father’s memory ; and take Dora back,  
And let all this be as it was before.’

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
By Mary. There was silence in the room ;  
And all at once the old man burst in sobs :—

‘I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill’d my son.  
I have kill’d him—but I loved him—my dear son.  
May God forgive me !—I have been to blame.  
Kiss me, my children.’

Then they clung about  
The old man’s neck, and kiss’d him many times. 160  
And all the man was broken with remorse ;  
And all his love came back a hundredfold ;  
And for three hours he sobb’d o’er William’s child  
Thinking of William.

So those four abode  
Within one house together ; and as years  
Went forward, Mary took another mate ;  
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

## V. AUDLEY COURT

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cram'd, and not a room  
For love or money. Let us picnic there  
At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast  
Hum'd like a hive all round the narrow quay,  
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the boat,  
And breathing of the sea. 'With all my heart,'  
Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' the swarm,  
And rounded by the stillness of the beach  
To where the bay runs up its latest horn. 10

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd  
The flat red granite ; so by many a sweep  
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd  
The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro' all  
The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,  
And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,  
With all its casements bedded, and its walls  
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid  
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound, 20  
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,  
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,  
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,  
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks  
Imbedded and injellied ; last, with these,  
A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
Prime, which I knew ; and so we sat and eat  
And talk'd old matters over ; who was dead,  
Who married, who was like to be, and how  
The races went, and who would rent the hall : 30  
Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was  
This season ; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,  
The four-field system, and the price of grain ;

And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,  
 And came again together on the king  
 With heated faces ; till he laugh'd aloud ;  
 And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung  
 To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—

‘Oh ! who would fight and march and countermarch,  
 Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field, 40  
 And shovell'd up into some bloody trench  
 Where no one knows ? but let me live my life.

‘Oh ! who would cast and balance at a desk,  
 Perch'd like a crow upon a thrée-legg'd stool,  
 Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
 Are full of chalk ? but let me live my life.

‘Who'd serve the state ? for if I carved my name  
 Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,  
 I might as well have traced it in the sands ;  
 The sea wastes all : but let me live my life. 50

‘Oh ! who would love ? I woo'd a woman once,  
 But she was sharper than an eastern wind,  
 And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn  
 Turns from the sea ; but let me live my life.’

He sang his song, and I replied with mine :  
 I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
 Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride  
 His books—the more the pity, so I said—  
 Came to the hammer here in March—and this—  
 I set the words, and added names I knew. 55

‘Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me  
 Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
 And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

‘Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm ;  
 Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
 For thou art fairer than all else that is.

‘Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast  
 Sleep, breathing love and trust against her eye  
 I go to-night : I come to-morrow morn.

'I go, but I return : I would I were 70  
 The pilot of the darkness and the dream.  
 Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.'  
 So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,  
 The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,  
 My friend ; and I, that having wherewithal,  
 And in the fallow leisure of my life  
 A rolling stone of here and everywhere,  
 Did what I would ; but ere the night we rose  
 And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just  
 In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf 80  
 Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
 The limit of the hills ; and as we sank  
 From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,  
 The town was hush'd beneath us : lower down  
 The bay was oily calm ; the harbour-buoy,  
 Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,  
 With one green sparkle ever and anon  
 Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

## VI. WALKING TO THE MAIL

*John.* I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look  
 Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
 The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.  
 Is yon plantation where this byway joins  
 The turnpike ?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by ?

*James.* The mail ? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now ?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see ?

No, not the Comnty Member's with the vane :  
 Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half  
 A score of gables,

*James.* That? Sir Edward Head's : 10  
But he's abroad : the place is to be sold.

*John.* Oh, his. He was not broken.

*James.* No, sir, he,  
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood  
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his face  
From all men, and commercing with himself,  
He lost the sense that handles daily life—  
That keeps us all in order more or less—  
And sick of home went overseas for change.

*John.* And whither?

*James.* Nay, who knows? he's here and there.  
But let him go ; his devil goes with him, 20  
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

*John.* What's that?

*James.* You saw the man—on Monday, was it?—  
There by the humpback'd willow ; half stands up  
And bristles ; half has fall'n and made a bridge ;  
And there he caught the younker tickling trout—  
Caught *in flagrante*—what's the Latin word?—  
*Delicto* : but his house, for so they say,  
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook  
The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,  
And rummaged like a rat : no servant stay'd : 30  
The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,  
And all his household stuff ; and with his boy  
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,  
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, ' What !  
You're flitting ! ' ' Yes, we're flitting,' says the ghost  
(For they had pack'd the thing among the beds,)  
' Oh well,' says he, ' you flitting with us too—  
Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again.'

*John.* He left his wife behind ; for so I heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my lady once : 40  
A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

*John.* Oh yet but I remember, ten years back—



'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—  
 You could not light upon a sweeter thing :  
 A body slight and round, and like a pear  
 In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
 Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin  
 As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved  
 At first like dove and dove were eat and dog. 50

She was the daughter of a cottager,  
 Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,  
 New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd  
 To what she is : a nature never kind !  
 Like men, like manners : like breeds like, they say :  
 Kind nature is the best : those manners next  
 That fit us like a nature second-hand ;  
 Which are indeed the manners of the great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this bill that past,  
 And fear of change at home, that drove him hence. 60

*James.* That was the last drop in the cup of gall.  
 I once was near him, when his bailiff brought  
 A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince  
 As from a venomous thing : he thought himself  
 A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry  
 Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes  
 Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs  
 Sweat on his blazon'd chairs ; but, sir, you know  
 That these two parties still divide the world—  
 Of those that want, and those that have : and still 70  
 The same old sore breaks out from age to age  
 With much the same result. Now I myself,  
 A Tory to the quick, was as a boy  
 Destructive, when I had not what I would.  
 I was at school—a college in the South :  
 There lived a flayflint near : we stole his fruit,  
 His hens, his eggs ; but there was law for us ;  
 We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,

With meditative grunts of much content,  
 Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud. 80  
 By night we dragg'd her to the college tower.  
 From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair  
 With hand and rope we hal'd the groaning sow,  
 And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.  
 Large range of prospect had the mother sow,  
 And but for daily loss of one she loved  
 As one by one we took them—but for this—  
 As never sow was higher in this world—  
 Might have been happy : but what lot is pure ?  
 We took them all, till she was left alone 90  
 Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
 And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

*John.* They found you out ?

*James.*

Not they.

*John.*

Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of man ?  
 His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who are sound,  
 That we should mimic this raw fool the world,  
 Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,  
 As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
 As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows  
 To Pity—more from ignorance than will. 100

But put your best foot forward, or I fear  
 That we shall miss the mail : and here it comes  
 With five at top : as quaint a four-in-hand  
 As you shall see—three pyebalds and a roan.

## VII. EDWIN MORRIS ; .

### OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
 My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a year,  
 My one Oasis in the dust and drouth

Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :  
 See here, my doing : curves of mountain, bridge,  
 Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
 When men knew how to build, upon a rock  
 With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock :  
 And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,  
 New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires, 10  
 Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chimney bulk  
 Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake  
 With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull  
 The curate ; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,  
 Long learned names of agaric, moss and fern,  
 Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,  
 Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,  
 Who read me rhymes elaborately good, 20  
 His own—I call'd him Crichton, for he seem'd  
 All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,  
 And his first passion ; and he answer'd me ;  
 And well his words became him : was he not  
 A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
 Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like he spoke.

'My love for Nature is as old as I ;  
 But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,  
 And three rich sennights more, my love for her. 30  
 My love for Nature and my love for her,  
 Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,  
 Twin-sisters differently beautiful.  
 To some full music rose and sank the sun,  
 And some full music seem'd to move and change  
 With all the varied changes of the dark,  
 And either twilight and the day between ;

For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again  
 Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet  
 To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe.' 40

Or this or something like to this he spoke.  
 Then said the fat-faced curate Edward Bull,  
 'I take it, God made the woman for the man,  
 And for the good and increase of the world.  
 A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
 To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,  
 And keeps us tight ; but these unreal ways  
 Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed  
 Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.  
 I say, God made the woman for the man, 50  
 And for the good and increase of the world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe too low :  
 But I have sudden touches, and can run  
 My faith beyond my practice into his :  
 Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
 I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
 I scarce have other music : yet say on.  
 What should one give to light on such a dream ?  
 I ask'd him half-sardonically.

'Give ?

Give all thou art,' he answer'd, and a light 60  
 Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek ;  
 'I would have hid her needle in my heart,  
 To save her little finger from a scratch  
 No deeper than the skin : my ears could hear  
 Her lightest breath ; her least remark was worth  
 The experience of the wise. I went and came ;  
 Her voice fled always thro' the summer land ;  
 I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days !  
 The flower of each, those moments when we met,  
 The crown of all, we met to part no more,' 70

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
 To take them as I did? but something jarr'd;  
 Whether he spoke too largely; that there seem'd  
 A touch of something false, some self-conceit,  
 Or over-smoothness: howsoe'er it was,  
 He scarcely hit my humour, and I said:

'Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone  
 Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,  
 As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
 Squeeze out a full God-bless-you right and left? 80  
 But you can talk: yours is a kindly vein:  
 I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as much within;  
 Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,  
 That like a purple beech among the greens  
 Looks out of place: 'tis from no want in her:  
 It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
 Or something of a wayward modern mind  
 Dissecting passion. Time will set me right.'

So spoke I knowing not the things that were.  
 Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull: 90  
 'God made the woman for the use of man,  
 And for the good and increase of the world.'  
 And I and Edwin laughed; and now we paused  
 About the windings of the marge to hear  
 The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms  
 And alders, garden-isles; and now we left  
 The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
 By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,  
 Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags, 100  
 My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him  
 That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
 The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles,

'Tis true, we met ; one hour I had, no more :  
 She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,  
 The close, ' Your Letty, only yours ; ' and this  
 Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn  
 Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
 My craft aground, and heard with beating heart  
 The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel ; 110  
 And out I stept, and up I crept : she moved,  
 Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers :  
 Then low and sweet I whistled thrice ; and she,  
 She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I  
 breathed

In some new planet : a silent cousin stole  
 Upon us and departed : ' Leave,' she cried,  
 ' O leave me ! ' ' Never, dearest, never : here  
 I brave the worst : ' and while we stood like fools  
 Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
 And poodles yell'd within, and out they came 120  
 Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. ' What, with him !  
 Go ' (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus) ; ' him !'  
 I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen—' Him !'  
 Again with hands of wild rejection ' Go !—  
 Girl, get you in ! ' She went—and in one month  
 They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,  
 To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
 And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile  
 And educated whisker. But for me,  
 They set an ancient creditor to work : 130  
 It seems I broke a close with force and arms :  
 There came a mystic token from the king  
 To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy !  
 I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd :  
 Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below :  
 I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the storm ;  
 So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
 Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps : yet long ago  
 I have pardon'd little Letty ; not indeed, 140  
 It may be, for her own dear sake but this,  
 She seems a part of those fresh days to me ;  
 For in the dust and drouth of London life  
 She moves among my visions of the lake,  
 While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then  
 While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
 The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

### VIII. ST. SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
 From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,  
 Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet  
 For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
 I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
 Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and sob,  
 Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,  
 Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,  
 This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years, 10  
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,  
 A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
 Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow ;  
 And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
 Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,  
 Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
 The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm. 20

O take the meaning, Lord : I do not breathe,  
 Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.

Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still  
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd  
My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,  
For I was strong and hale of body then ;  
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,  
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard 30  
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,  
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound  
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw  
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.  
Now am I feeble grown ; my end draws nigh ;  
I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,  
So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
About the column's base, and almost blind,  
And scarce can recognise the fields I know ;  
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew ; 40  
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,  
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,  
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,  
Have mercy, mercy : take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
Who may be saved ? who is it may be saved ?  
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here ?  
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.  
For did not all thy martyrs die one death ?  
For either they were stoned, or crucified, 50  
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn  
In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here  
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.  
Bear witness, if I could have found a way  
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)  
More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,



I had not stinted practice, O my God,

For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
Not this alone I bore : but while I lived 60  
In the white convent down the valley there,  
For many weeks about my loins I wore  
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,  
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose ;  
And spake not of it to a single soul,  
Until the ulcer, eating through my skin,  
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
My brethren marvel'd greatly. More than this  
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee, 70  
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.  
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones ;  
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice  
Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes  
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,  
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came  
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live :  
And they say then that I work'd miracles,  
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind, 80  
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,  
Knowest alone whether this was or no.  
Have mercy, mercy ! cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,  
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve ;  
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose  
Twenty by measure ; last of all, I grew  
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,  
That numbers forty cubits from the soil. 90

I think that I have borne as much as this—  
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow light,

And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—  
So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and say,  
'Fall down, O Simeon : thou hast suffer'd long  
For ages and for ages !' then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
Perplexing me with lies ; and oft I fall, 100  
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies  
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.

But yet

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints  
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth  
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,  
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,  
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,  
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,  
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints ; 110  
Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am wet  
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.  
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back ;  
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,  
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die :  
O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am ;  
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin : 120  
'Tis their own doing ; this is none of mine ;  
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,  
That here come those that worship me ? Ha ! ha !  
They think that I am somewhat. What am I ?  
The silly people take me for a saint,  
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers :  
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)

Have all in all endured as much, and more  
 Than many just and holy men, whose names  
 Are register'd and calendar'd for saints. 130

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.  
 What is it I can have done to merit this?  
 I am a sinner viler than you all.  
 It may be I have wrought some miraeles,  
 And cured some halt and maim'd ; but what of that ?  
 It may be, no one, even among the saints,  
 May match his pains with mine ; but what of that ?  
 Yet do not rise ; for you may look on me,  
 And in your looking you may kneel to God.  
 Speak ! is there any of you halt or maim'd ? 140  
 I think you know I have some power with Heaven  
 For my long penance : let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.  
 They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark ! they shout  
 'St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,  
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,  
 God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
 Can I work miraeles and not be saved ?  
 This is not told of any. They were saints.  
 It cannot be but that I shall be saved ; 150  
 Yea, erown'd a saint. They shout, 'Behold a saint !'  
 And lower voices saint me from above.  
 Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull ehrysalis  
 Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death  
 Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now  
 Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all  
 My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,  
 I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname  
 Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,  
 The watcher on the column till the end ; 160  
 I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes ;  
 I, whose bald brows in silent hours become

Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
From my high nest of penance here proclaim  
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,  
A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath  
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve,  
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
I smote them with the cross ; they swarm'd again. 170  
In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest :  
They flapp'd my light out as I read : I saw  
Their faces grow between me and my book ;  
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine  
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,  
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns ;  
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast  
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,  
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain, 180  
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still  
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise :  
God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,  
Among the powers and princes of this world,  
To make me an example to mankind,  
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say  
But that a time may come—yea, even now,  
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs  
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
When you may worship me without reproach ; 190  
For I will leave my relics in your land,  
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,  
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,  
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain  
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,  
In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
These heavy, horny eyes. The end ! the end !

Surely the end ! What's here ? a shape, a shade,  
 A flash of light. Is that the angel there 200  
 That holds a crown ? Come, blessed brother, come.  
 I know thy glittering face. I waited long ;  
 My brows are ready. What ! deny it now ?  
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ !  
 'Tis gone : 'tis here again ; the crown ! the crown !  
 So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
 And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
 Sweet ! sweet ! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.  
 Ah ! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints : I trust  
 That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven. 210

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,  
 Among you there, and let him presently  
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
 And climbing up into my airy home,  
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament ;  
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
 I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
 A quarter before twelve.

. But thou, O Lord,  
 Aid all this foolish people ; let them take  
 Example, pattern : lead them to thy light. 220

## IX. THE TALKING OAK

Once more the gate behind me falls ;  
 Once more before my face  
 I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
 That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
 Beneath its drift of smoke ;  
 And ah ! with what delighted eyes  
 I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
Ere that, which in me burn'd, 10  
The love, that makes me thrice a man,  
Could hope itself return'd ;

To yonder oak within the field  
I spoke without restraint,  
And with a larger faith appeal'd  
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
And told him of my choice,  
Until he plagiarised a heart,  
And answer'd with a voice. 20

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven  
None else could understand ;  
I found him garrulously given,  
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
Is many a weary hour ;  
'Twere well to question him, and try  
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace, 30  
Whose topmost branches can discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
If ever maid or spouse,  
As fair as my Olivia, came  
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
Whatever maiden grace  
The good old Summers, year by year  
Made ripe in Sumner-chace : 40

' Old Summers, when the monk was fat,  
And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
The girls upon the cheek,

' Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
And number'd bead, and shrift,  
Bluff Harry broke into the spence  
And turn'd the cows adrift :

' And I have seen some score of those  
Fresh faces, that would thrive  
When his man-minded offset rose  
To chase the deer at five ;

50

' And all that from the town would stroll,  
Till that wild wind made work  
In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
Went by me, like a stork :

' The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
And others, passing praise,  
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
For puritanic stays :

60

' And I have shadow'd many a group  
Of beauties, that were born  
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn ;

' And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
About me leap'd and laugh'd  
The modish Cupid of the day,  
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

' I swear (and else may insects prick  
Each leaf into a gall)  
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
Is three times worth them all ;

70

'For those and theirs, by Nature's law,  
Have faded long ago ;  
But in these latter springs I saw  
Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gamboll'd on the greens  
A baby-germ, to when  
The maiden blossoms of her teens  
Could number five from ten.

80

'I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,  
(And hear me with thine ears,)  
That, tho' I circle in the grain  
Five hundred rings of years—

'Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass :

'For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.'

90

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace ;  
And from the topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft hast heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs.

100

'O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town ;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.



‘ And with him Albert came on his.

I look’d at him with joy :

As cowslip unto oxlip is,

So seems she to the boy.

‘ An hour had past—and, sitting straight

Within the low-wheel’d chaise,

Her mother trundled to the gate

Behind the dappled grays.

110

‘ But as for her, she stay’d at home,

And on the roof she went,

And down the way you use to come,

She look’d with discontent.

‘ She left the novel half-uncut

Upon the rosewood shelf ;

She left the new piano shut :

She could not please herself.

120

‘ Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,

And livelier than a lark

She sent her voice thro’ all the holt

Before her, and the park.

‘ A light wind chased her on the wing,

And in the chase grew wild,

As close as might be would he cling

About the darling child :

‘ But light as any wind that blows

So fleetly did she stir,

The flower, she touch’d on, dipt and rose,

And turn’d to look at her.

130

‘ And here she came, and round me play’d,

And sang to me the whole

Of those three stanzas that you made

About my “ giant bole ; ”

'And in a fit of frolic mirth

She strove to span my waist :

Alas, I was so broad of girth,

I could not be embraced.

140

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech

That here beside me stands,

That round me, clasping each in each,

She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet

As woodbine's fragile hold,

Or when I feel about my feet

The berried briony fold.'

O muffle round thy knees with fern,

And shadow Sumner-chace !

150

Long may thy topmost branch discern

The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name

I carved with many vows

When last with throbbing heart I came

To rest beneath thy boughs ?

'O yes, she wander'd round and round

These knotted knees of mine,

And found, and kiss'd the name she found,

And sweetly murmur'd thine.

160

'A teardrop trembled from its source,

And down my surface crept.

My sense of touch is something coarse,

But I believe she wept.

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,

She glanced across the plain ;

But not a creature was in sight :

She kiss'd me once again.

' Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr'd :

170

' And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern'd,  
Like those blind motions of the Spring,  
That show the year is turn'd.

' Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm—  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden's tender palm.

180

' I, rooted here among the groves  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust :

' For ah ! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk.

' But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,

190

' She had not found me so remiss ;  
But lightly issuing thro',  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,  
With usury thereto.'

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the howers  
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well ;  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell.

'Tis little more : the day was warm ;  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm  
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes 210  
Thro' all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

'I took the swarming sound of life—  
The music from the town—  
The murmurs of the drum and fife  
And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye ;  
A second flutter'd round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly ; 220

'A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine ;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ancle fine,

'Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadow'd all her rest—  
Dropt dew upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck'd it out, and drew 230  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.



O rock upon thy towery-top  
All throats that gurgle sweet !  
All starry culmination drop  
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow—  
And while he sinks or swells 270  
The full south-breeze around thee blow  
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
That under deeply strikes !  
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
High up, in silver spikes !

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
But, rolling as in sleep,  
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
That makes thee broad and deep ! 280

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
That only by thy side  
Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,  
She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
And praise thee more in both 290  
Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,  
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
And mystic sentence spoke ;  
And more than England honours that,  
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
 Till all the paths were dim,  
 And far below the Roundhead rode,  
 And humm'd a surly hymn.

300

## X. LOVE AND DUTY

Or love that never found his earthly close,  
 What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?  
 Or all the same as if he had not been?

Not so. Shall Error in the round of time  
 Still father Truth? O shall the braggart shout  
 For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself  
 Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law  
 System and empire? Sin itself he found  
 The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?  
 And only he, this wonder, dead, become  
 Mere highway dust? or year by year alone  
 Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
 Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

10

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,  
 Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,  
 The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,  
 The long mechanic paces to and fro,  
 The set gray life, and apathetic end.

But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?  
 O three times less unworthy! likewise thou  
 Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy years,  
 The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon  
 Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring  
 The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit  
 Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,  
 And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

20

Will some one say, Then why not ill for good?  
 Why took ye not your pastime? To that man  
 My work shall answer, since I knew the right

And did it ; for a man is not as God, 30  
 But then most Godlike being most a man.  
 —So let me think 'tis well for thee and me—  
 Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
 Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow  
 To feel it ! For how hard it seem'd to me,  
 When eyes, love-languid thro' half tears would dwell  
 One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,  
 Then not to dare to see ! when thy low voice,  
 Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep  
 My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash, 40  
 And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,  
 And on thy bosom (deep desired relief !)  
 Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd  
 Upon my brain, my senses and my soul !

For Love himself took part against himself  
 To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—  
 O this world's curse,—beloved but hated—came  
 Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,  
 And crying, ' Who is this ? behold thy bride,'  
 She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard 50  
 To alien ears, I did not speak to these—  
 No, not to thee, but to thyself in me :  
 Hard is my doom and thine : thou knowest it all.

Could Love part thus ? was it not well to speak,  
 To have spoken once ? It could not but be well.  
 The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,  
 The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,  
 And all good things from evil, brought the night  
 In which we sat together and alone,  
 And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart, 60  
 Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,  
 That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears  
 As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way





XI. THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote :

It was last summer on a tour in Wales :

Old James was with me : we that day had been

Up Snowdon ; and I wish'd for Leonard there,

And found him in Llanberis : then we crost

Between the lakes, and clamber'd half way up

The counter side ; and that same song of his

He told me ; for I banter'd him, and swore

They said he lived shut up within himself,

A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days, 10

That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,

Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech, 'Give,

Cram us with all,' but count not me the herd !

To which 'They call me what they will,' he said :

'But I was born too late : the fair new forms,

That float about the threshold of an age,

Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—

Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd—

Are taken by the forelock. Let it be. . .

But if you care indeed to listen, hear 20

These measured words, my work of yesternorn.

'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move ;

The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun ;

The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse ;

And human things returning on themselves

Move onward, leading up the golden year.

'Ah, tho' the times, when some new thought can bud,

Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,

Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore,

Have ebb and flow conditioning their march, 30

And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

'When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,

But smit with freer light shall slowly melt

In many streams to fatten lower lands,

And light shall spread, and man be liker man  
Thro' all the season of the golden year.

'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?  
If all the world were falcons, what of that?

The wonder of the eagle were the less,

But he not less the eagle. Happy days

40

Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

'Fly, happy happy sails, and bear the Press;

Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;

Knit land to land, and blowing havenward

With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,

Enrich the markets of the golden year.

'But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good  
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace

Lie like a shaft of light across the land,

And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,

50

Thro' all the circle of the golden year?"

Thus far he flow'd, and ended; whereupon

'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence answer'd James—

'Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,

Not in our time, nor in our children's time,

'Tis like the second world to us that live;

'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven

As on this vision of the golden year.'

With that he struck his staff against the rocks

And broke it, —James,—you know him,—old, but full

60

Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,

And like an oaken stock in winter woods,

Overblowish'd with the hoary clematis:

Then added, all in heat:

'What stuff is this!

Old writers push'd the happy season back,—

The more fools they,—we forward: dreamers both:

You most, that in an age, when every hour

Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,

Live on, God love us, as if the seedman, rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not plunge 70  
His hand into the bag : but well I know  
That unto him who works, and feels he works,  
This same grand year is ever at the doors.'

He spoke ; and, high above, I heard them blast  
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap  
And buffet round the hills, from bluff to bluff.

XII. ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not  
I cannot rest from travel : I will drink  
Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd  
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those  
That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when  
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;  
For always roaming with a hungry heart  
Much have I seen and known ; cities of men  
And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ;  
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
I am a part of all that I have met ;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move.  
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !  
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life  
Were all too little, and of one to me

Little remains : but every hour is saved  
 From that eternal silence, *something more*,  
 A bringer of new things ; and vile it were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30  
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild  
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail 40  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port : the vessel puffs her sail :  
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,  
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—  
 That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed  
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ;  
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ; 50  
 Death closes all : but something ere the end,  
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :  
 The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the deep . . . .  
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,  
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
 The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds  
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60  
 Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :  
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
 Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho'  
 We are not now that strength which in old days  
 Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are ;  
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70

## XIII. TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay and fall,  
 The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,  
 Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,  
 And after many a summer dies the swan.  
 Me only cruel immortality  
 Consumes : I wither slowly in thine arms,  
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream  
 The ever-silent spaces of the East,  
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn. 10

Alas ! for this gray shadow, once a man—  
 So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd  
 To his great heart none other than a God !  
 I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'  
 Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,  
 Like wealthy men who care not how they give.  
 But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,  
 And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,  
 And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd 20  
 To dwell in presence of immortal youth,  
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,

And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,  
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears  
To hear me? Let me go : take back thy gift :  
Why should a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of men,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance 30  
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart ; there comes  
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.  
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals  
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,  
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.  
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,  
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,  
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team  
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise, 40  
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,  
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo ! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
In silence, then before thine answer given  
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,  
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,  
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true ?  
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'

Ay me ! ay me ! with what another heart 50  
In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—  
The lucid outline forming round thee ; saw  
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings ;  
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood

Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all  
 Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,  
 Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm  
 With kisses balmier than half-opening buds  
 Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd 60  
 Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,  
 Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,  
 While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East :  
 How can my nature longer mix with thine ?  
 Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
 Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet  
 Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam  
 Floats up from those dim fields about the homes  
 Of happy men that have the power to die, 70  
 And grassy barrows of the happier dead.  
 Release me, and restore me to the ground ;  
 Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave :  
 Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn ;  
 I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
 And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

## XIV. LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn :  
 Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the  
 bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,  
 Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley  
 Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy  
 tracts,  
 And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.



And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,  
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Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley  
Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy  
tracts,

And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to  
rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow  
shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid. 10

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth  
sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time ;  
When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed ;  
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it  
closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see ;  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would  
be.——

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast ;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another  
crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove ;  
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts  
of love. 20

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one  
so young,  
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance  
hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth  
to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm  
of sighs—

All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me  
wrong ;'

Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin ?' weeping, 'I have  
loved thee long.' 30

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing  
hands ;

Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords  
with might ;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out  
of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses  
ring,

And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the  
Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately  
ships,

And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more !

O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren  
shore ! 40

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have  
sung,

Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ?—having known me—to  
decline

On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than  
mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by day,  
 What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with  
 clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a clown,  
 And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag  
 thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel  
 force,  
 Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his  
 horse. 50

What is this ? his eyes are heavy : think not they are glazed  
 with wine.  
 Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his hand in  
 thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought :  
 Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter  
 thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—  
 Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my  
 hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's dis-  
 grace,  
 Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of  
 youth !  
 Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living  
 truth ! 60

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's  
 rule !  
 Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the  
 fool !

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy proved—

Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?

I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come

As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?

Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind? . 70

I remember one that perish'd: sweetly did she speak and move:

Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?

No—she never loved me truly: love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,

That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,

In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,

Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall. 80

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken  
 sleep,  
 To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt  
 weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the phan-  
 tom years,  
 And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine  
 ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy  
 pain.  
 Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get thee to thy rest  
 again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender voice will  
 cry.

'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings thee  
 rest.

Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's  
 breast. 90

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his  
 due.

Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,  
 With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's  
 heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was  
 not exempt—

Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy self-contempt !

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy ! wherefore should I  
 care ?

I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these ?

Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys. 100

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow. I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I should do ?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground, When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honour feels,

And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness ? I will turn that earlier page. Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age !

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife, When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life ;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield, 111

Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn, Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn ;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then, Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throng of men :

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new ;

That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do :



For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would  
be : 120

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a  
ghastly dew

From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing  
warm,

With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the  
thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags  
were fur'd

In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm  
in awe, 129

And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced  
eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint :

Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point ;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying  
fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the  
sun.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful  
joys, 139

Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the  
shore,

And the individual withers, and the world is more and  
more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden  
breast,

Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his  
rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-  
horn,

They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their  
scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd  
string?

I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a  
thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! woman's pleasure,  
woman's pain—

Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower  
brain : 150

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with  
mine,

Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some  
retreat

Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat ;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd ;—  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,  
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy  
    skies,  
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of  
    Paradise. 160

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer  
    from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited  
    tree—  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march  
    of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake  
    mankind.

There the passions craup'd no longer shall have scope and  
    breathing space ;  
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky  
    race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall  
    run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the  
    sun ; 170

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the  
    brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—  
Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I *know* my words are  
    wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian  
    child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious  
gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower  
pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime ?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,  
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in  
Ajalon ! 180

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us  
range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves  
of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger  
day :  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life  
begun :  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh  
the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall !  
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree  
fall. 190

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over heath and  
holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow ;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

## XX. GRIFFIN

*There is a tale of an old, old time,  
 Of a king who was good and just and true,  
 And a queen who was fair and young and true,  
 And a prince who was brave and true and true.*

Not only we, the latest seed of him,  
 New men, that in the flyme of a wheel  
 Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
 Of right and wrong, have loved the people well,  
 And heeded to see them overtax'd, but she  
 Did more, and underwood, and overcame, 10  
 The women of a thousand summers back,  
 Gashen, wife to that same King, who ruled  
 In Coventry — but when he had a tax  
 Upon his town, and all the mothers brought  
 Their children, clamouring, 'If we pay, we starve!' —  
 She sought her lord, and found him, where he stood  
 About the hall, among his shoes, alone,  
 His hand a foot before him, and his hair  
 A yard behind — she told him of their town,  
 And pruned him, 'If they pay this tax, they starve' — 20  
 Whence he turned, red-faced, full of rage,  
 'You would not let your little Racer, who  
 Has such a star in his eye? But I would die, — and she  
 He touched, and swore by Peter and by Paul  
 That he'd get at the diamond in her eye  
 'Oh, woe, woe, you tell?' — 'Alas!' she said,  
 'It proves me what it is I would not do'  
 And then she hid her face, her face so fair,  
 He swore and swore, and swore, and swore, and swore,  
 And kept it up — and no more — and no more, 30  
 The people, with great, rich, many, in the  
 — of it alone, the people, of her kind  
 A word to them, all the people, but and blow,  
 Made a great noise together for an hour,

Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all  
The hard condition ; but that she would loose  
The people : therefore, as they loved her well,  
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,  
No eye look down, she passing ; but that all 40  
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there  
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon  
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,  
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee ;  
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair  
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid  
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd 50  
The gateway ; there she found her palfrey trapt  
In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity :  
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.  
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout  
Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur  
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot  
Light horrors thro' her pulses : the blind walls  
Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead 60  
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she  
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw  
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field  
Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity :  
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,  
The fatal byword of all years to come,  
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will  
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head, 70

And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait  
 On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused ;  
 And she, that knew not, pass'd : and all at once,  
 With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon  
 Was elash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,  
 One after one : but even then she gain'd  
 Her bower : whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,  
*To meet her lord, she took the tax away*  
 And built herself an everlasting name.

## XVI. THE DAY-DREAM

### PROLOGUE

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :  
 A pleasant hour has passed away  
 While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
 The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
 As by the lattice you reclined,  
 I went thro' many wayward moods  
 To see you dreaming—and, behind,  
 A summer crisp with shining woods.  
 And I too dream'd, until at last  
 Across my fancy, brooding warm, 10  
 The reflex of a legend past,  
 And loosely settled into form.  
 And would you have the thought I had,  
 And see the vision that I saw,  
 Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
 A crimson to the quaint Macaw,  
 And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
 Nor look with that too-earnest eye—  
 The rhymes are dazzled from their place,  
 And order'd words asunder fly. 20

## THE SLEEPING PALACE

## I

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,  
Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
Here stays the blood along the veins.  
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,  
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
Like hints and echoes of the world  
To spirits folded in the womb.

## II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
On every slanting terrace-lawn. 30  
The fountain to his place returns  
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
Here droops the banner on the tower,  
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
The peacock in his laurel bower,  
The parrot in his gilded wires.

## III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :  
In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
The mantles from the golden pegs  
Droop sleepily : no sound is made, 40  
Not even of a gnat that sings.  
More like a picture seemeth all  
Than those old portraits of old kings,  
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

## IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and there  
The wrinkled steward at his task,  
The maid-of-honour blooming fair ;



The page has caught her hand in his :  
 Her lips are sever'd as to speak :  
 His own are pouted to a kiss :  
 The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

## v

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
 The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,  
 Make prisms in every carven glass,  
 And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.  
 Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
 Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
 His state the king reposing keeps.  
 He must have been a jovial king.

## vi

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
 At distance like a little wood ;  
 Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
 And grapes with bunches red as blood ;  
 All creeping plants, a wall of green  
 Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,  
 And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
 High up, the topmost palace spire.

## vii

When will the hundred summers die,  
 And thought and time be born again,  
 And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
 Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?  
 Here all things in their place remain,  
 As all were order'd, ages since.  
 Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
 And bring the fated fairy Prince.

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

## I

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purple coverlet,  
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown, 80  
On either side her tranced form  
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :  
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
And moves not on the rounded curl.

## II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
Languidly ever ; and, amid  
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,  
Glow's forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
With bracelets of the diamond bright : 90  
Her constant beauty doth inform  
Stillness with love, and day with light.

## III

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard  
In palace chambers far apart.  
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
That lie upon her charmed heart.  
She sleeps : on either hand upswells  
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :  
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
A perfect form in perfect rest. 100

## THE ARRIVAL

## I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
To those that seek them issue forth ;  
For love in sequel works with fate,  
And draws the veil from hidden worth.

He travels far from other skies—  
 His mantle glitters on the rocks—  
 A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
 And lighter-footed than the fox.

## II

The bodies and the bones of those  
 That strove in other days to pass, 110  
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
 He gazes on the silent dead :  
 'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'  
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
 'The many fail : the one succeeds.'

## III

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :  
 He breaks the hedge, he enters there :  
 The colour flies into his cheeks :  
 He trusts to light on something fair ; 120  
 For all his life the charm did talk  
 About his path, and hover near  
 With words of promise in his walk,  
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

## IV

More close and close his footsteps wind :  
 The Magic Music in his heart  
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
 The quiet chamber far apart.  
 His spirit flutters like a lark,  
 He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee. 130  
 'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
 How dark those hidden eyes must be !'

## THE REVIVAL

## I

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.  
There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;  
A fuller light illumined all,  
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

140

## II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,  
The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,  
The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,  
And all the long-pent stream of life  
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III

And last with these the king awoke,  
And in his chair himself uprear'd,  
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,  
'By holy rood, a royal beard !  
How say you ? we have slept, my lords.  
My beard has grown into my lap.'  
The barons swore, with many words,  
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

150

## IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still  
My joints are somewhat stiff or so.  
My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
I mentioned half an hour ago ?'

160

The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
 In courteous words return'd reply :  
 But dallied with his golden chain,  
 And, smiling, put the question by.

### THE DEPARTURE

#### I

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
 And round her waist she felt it fold,  
 And far across the hills they went  
 In that new world which is the old :  
 Across the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim, 170  
 And deep into the dying day  
 The happy princess follow'd him.

#### II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,  
 O love, for such another kiss ;'  
 'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,  
 'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'  
 And o'er them many a sliding star,  
 And many a merry wind was borne,  
 And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
 The twilight melted into morn. 180

#### III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep !'  
 'O happy sleep, that lightly fled !'  
 'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep !'  
 'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead !'  
 And o'er them many a flowing range  
 Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
 And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
 The twilight died into the dark.

## IV.

'A hundred summers ! can it be ?  
 And whither goest thou, tell me where ?' 190  
 'O seek my father's court with me,  
 For there are greater wonders there.'  
 And o'er the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
 Beyond the night, across the day,  
 Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

## MORAL

## I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And if you find no moral there,  
 Go, look in any glass and say,  
 'What moral is in being fair.' 200  
 Oh, to what uses shall we put  
 The wildweed-flower that simply blows ?  
 And is there any moral shut  
 Within the bosom of the rose ?

## II

But any man that walks the mead,  
 In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,  
 According as his humours lead,  
 A meaning suited to his mind.  
 And liberal applications lie  
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend ; 210  
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
 Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOI

## I

You shake your head. A random string  
 Your finer female sense offends.  
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
 To fall asleep with all one's friends ;

To pass with all our social ties  
 To silence from the paths of men ;  
 And every hundred years to rise  
 And learn the world, and sleep again ; 220  
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
 And wake on science grown to more,  
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
 As wild as aught of fairy lore ;  
 And all that else the years will show,  
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
 The vast Republics that may grow,  
 The Federations and the Powers ;  
 Titanic forces taking birth  
 In divers seasons, divers climes ; 230  
 For we are Ancients of the earth,  
 And in the morning of the times.

## II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
 Thro' sunny decads new and strange,  
 Or gay quinquenniads would we reap  
 The flower and quintessence of change.

## III

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !  
 So much your eyes my fancy take—  
 Be still the first to leap to light  
 That I might kiss those eyes awake ! 240  
 For, am I right, or am I wrong,  
 To choose your own you did not care ;  
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
 And I will take my pleasure there :  
 And, am I right or am I wrong,  
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',  
 To search a meaning for the song,  
 Perforce will still revert to you ;

Nor finds a closer truth than this  
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd, 250  
 And evermore a costly kiss  
 The prelude to some brighter world.

## IV

For since the time when Adam first  
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
 And every bird of Eden burst  
 In carol, every bud to flower,  
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes,  
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd ?  
 Where on the double rosebud droops  
 The fulness of the pensive mind ; 260  
 Which all too dearly self-involved,  
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;  
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
 'That lets thee neither hear nor see :  
 But break it. In the name of wife, -  
 And in the rights that name may give,  
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
 And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And, if you find a meaning there, 270  
 O whisper to your glass, and say,  
 'What wonder, if he thinks me fair ?'  
 What wonder I was all unwise,  
 To shape the song for your delight  
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise  
 That float thro' Heaven, and cannot light ?  
 Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
 But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
 And either sacred unto you. 280



## XVII. AMPHION

My father left a park to me,  
 But it is wild and barren,  
 A garden too with scarce a tree,  
 And waster than a warren :  
 Yet say the neighbours when they call,  
 It is not bad but good land,  
 And in it is the germ of all  
 That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great  
 In days of old Amphion,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 Nor cared for seed or scion !  
 And had I lived when song was great,  
 And legs of trees were limber,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 And fiddled in the timber !

10

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,  
 Such happy intonation,  
 Wherever he sat down and sung  
 He left a small plantation ;  
 Wherever in a lonely grove  
 He set up his forlorn pipes,  
 The gouty oak began to move,  
 And flounder into hornpipes.

20

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,  
 And, as tradition teaches,  
 Young ashes pirouetted down  
 Coquetting with young beeches ;  
 And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
 Ran forward to his rhyming,  
 And from the valleys underneath  
 Came little copses climbing.

30

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
And down the middle, buzz ! she went  
With all her bees behind her :  
The poplars, in long order due,  
With cypress promenaded,  
The shock-head willows two and two  
By rivers galloped.

40

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,  
Came yews, a dismal coterie ;  
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,  
Poussetting with a sloe-tree :  
Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
The vine stream'd out to follow,  
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,  
When, ere his song was ended,  
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
The country-side descended ;  
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves  
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-frighten'd  
As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,  
And wanton without measure ;  
So youthful and so flexile then,  
You moved her at your pleasure.  
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the twigs  
And make her dance attendance :  
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs  
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age  
I could not move a thistle ;

The very sparrows in the hedge  
Scarce answer to my whistle ;  
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
With strumming and with scraping, 70  
A jackass heehaws from the rick,  
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound  
Like sleepy counsel pleading ;  
O Lord !—'tis in my neighbour's ground,  
The modern Muses reading.  
They read Botanic Treatises,  
And Works on Gardening thro' there,  
And Methods of transplanting trees  
To look as if they grew there. 80

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose  
O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
And show you slips of all that grows  
From England to Van Diemen.  
They read in arbours clipt and cut,  
And alleys, faded places,  
By squares of tropic summer shut  
And warn'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
Are neither green or sappy ; 90  
Half-conscious of the garden squirt,  
The spindlings look unhappy.  
Better to me the meanest weed  
That blows upon its mountain,  
The vilest herb that runs to seed  
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,  
And years of cultivation,  
Upon my proper patch of soil  
To grow my own plantation. 100

I'll take the showers as they fall,  
I will not vex my bosom :  
Enough if at the end of all  
A little garden blossom.

## XVIII. ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
Are sparkling to the moon :  
My breath to heaven like vapour goes :  
May my soul follow soon !  
The shadows of the convent-towers  
Slant down the snowy sward,  
Still creeping with the creeping hours  
That lead me to my Lord :  
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
As are the frosty skies, 10  
Or this first snowdrop of the year  
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,  
To yonder shining ground ;  
As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
To yonder argent round ;  
So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
My spirit before Thee ;  
So in mine earthly house I am,  
To that I hope to be. 20  
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,  
Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;  
The flashes come and go ;  
All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
And strows her lights below,

And deepens on and up ! the gates  
 Roll back, and far within  
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
 To make me pure of sin.  
 The sabbaths of Eternity,  
 One sabbath deep and wide—  
 A light upon the shining sea—  
 The Bridegroom with his bride !

30

### XIX. SIR GALAHAD

My good blade earves the casques of men,  
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
 My strength is as the strength of ten,  
 Because my heart is pure.  
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
 The horse and rider reel :  
 They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
 And when the tide of combat stands,  
 Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
 That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
 On whom their favours fall !  
 For them I battle till the end,  
 To save from shame and thrall :  
 But all my heart is drawn above,  
 My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :  
 I never felt the kiss of love,  
 Nor maiden's hand in mine.

More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
 Me mightier transports move and thrill ;  
 So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
 A virgin heart in work and will.

10

20

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
 A light before me swims,  
 Between dark stems the forest glows,  
 I hear a noise of hymns :  
 Then by some secret shrine I ride ;  
 I hear a voice but none are there ;  
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
 The tapers burning fair.  
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

30

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
 I find a magic bark ;  
 I leap on board : no helmsman steers :  
 I float till all is dark.  
 A gentle sound, an awful light !  
 Three angels bear the holy Grail :  
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
 On sleeping wings they sail.  
 Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !  
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
 As down dark tides the glory slides,  
 And star-like mingles with the stars.

40

When on my goodly charger borne  
 Thro' dreaming towns I go,  
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
 The streets are dumb with snow.  
 The tempest crackles on the leads,  
 And, ringing, springs from brand and rain :  
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
 And gilds the driving hail.  
 I leave the plain, I climb the height :  
 No branchy thicket shelter yields ;

50



Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's will : 10  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;  
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;  
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said !  
Cruelly came they back to-day :  
"You're too slight and fickle," I said,  
"To trouble the heart of Edward Gray." 20

'There I put my face in the grass—  
Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair :  
I repent me of all I did :  
Speak a little, Ellen Adair !"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
"Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;  
And here the heart of Edward Gray !"

'Love may come, and love may go,  
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree ; 30  
But I will love no more, no more,  
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone :  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
There lies the body of Ellen Adair !  
And there the heart of Edward Gray !'



## XXI.

## WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

## MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,  
 To which I most resort,  
 How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.  
 Go fetch a pint of port :  
 But let it not be such as that  
 You set before chance-comers,  
 But such whose father-grape grew fat  
 On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
 But may she still be kind, 10  
 And whisper lovely words, and use  
 Her influence on the mind,  
 To make me write my random rhymes,  
 Ere they be half-forgotten ;  
 Nor add and alter, many times,  
 Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
 Her laurel in the wine,  
 And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
 These favour'd lips of mine ; 20  
 Until the charm have power to make  
 New lifeblood warm the bosom,  
 And barren commonplaces break  
 In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;  
 Her gradual fingers steal  
 And touch upon the master-chord  
 Of all I felt and feel.  
 Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
 And phantom hopes assemble ; 30

And that child's heart within the man's  
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,  
By many pleasant ways,  
Against its fountain upward runs  
The current of my days :  
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;  
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;  
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,  
My college friendships glimmer.

40

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,  
Unboding critic-pen,  
Or that eternal want of pence,  
Which vexes public men,  
Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
For that which all deny them—  
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,  
Tho' fortune clip my wings,  
I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
Half-views of men and things.  
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;  
There must be stormy weather ;  
But for some true result of good  
All parties work together.

50

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;  
If old things, there are new ;  
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
Yet glimpses of the true.  
Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
We lack not rhymes and reasons.  
As on this whirligig of Time  
We eirele with the seasons.

60

This earth is rich in man and maid ;  
With fair horizons bound ;  
This whole wide earth of light and shade  
Comes out a perfect round.  
High over roaring Temple-bar,  
And set in Heaven's third story, 70  
I look at all things as they are,  
But thro' a kind of glory.

---

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest  
Half-mused, or reeling ripe,  
The pint, you brought me, was the best  
That ever came from pipe.  
But tho' the port surpasses praise,  
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
Is there some magic in the place ?  
Or do my peptics differ ? 80

For since I came to live and learn,  
No pint of white or red  
Had ever half the power to turn  
This wheel within my head,  
Which bears a season'd brain about,  
Unsubject to confusion,  
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,  
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
With many kinsmen gay, 90  
• Where long and largely we carouse  
As who shall say me nay :  
Each month, a birth-day coming on ;  
We drink defying trouble,  
Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
 Had relish fiery-new,  
 Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,  
 As old as Waterloo ; 100  
 Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,  
 In musty bins and chambers,  
 Had cast upon its crusty side  
 The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !  
 She answer'd to my call,  
 She changes with that mood or this,  
 Is all-in-all to all :  
 She lit the spark within my throat,  
 To make my blood run quicker, 110  
 Used all her fiery will, and smote  
 Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
 The waiter's hands, that reach  
 To each his perfect pint of stout,  
 His proper chop to each.  
 He looks not like the common breed  
 That with the napkin dally ;  
 I think he came like Ganymede,  
 From some delightful valley. 120

The Cock was of a larger egg  
 Than modern poultry drop,  
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
 And cramn'd a plumper crop ;  
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
 Crow'd lustier late and early,  
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
 And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,  
 Till in a court he saw 130

A something-pottle-bodied boy .  
 That knuckled at the taw :  
 He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,  
 Flew over roof and casement :  
 His brothers of the weather stood  
 Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,  
 And follow'd with acclaims,  
 A sign to many a staring shire  
 Came crowing over Thames. 140  
 Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
 Till, where the street grows straiter,  
 One fix'd for ever at the door,  
 And one became head-waiter.

---

But whither would my fancy go ?  
 How out of place she makes  
 The violet of a legend blow  
 Among the chops and steaks !  
 'Tis but a steward of the can,  
 One shade more plump than common ; 150  
 As just and mere a serving-man  
 As any born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down  
 Into the common day ?  
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,  
 Which I shall have to pay ?  
 For, something duller than at first,  
 Nor wholly comfortable,  
 I sit, my empty glass reversed,  
 And thrumming on the table : 160  
 Half fearful that, with self at strife,  
 I take myself to task ;

Lest of the fulness of my life  
 I leave an empty flask :  
 For I had hope, by something true  
 To prove myself a poet :  
 But, while I plan and plan my life  
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began  
 Till they be gather'd up :  
 The truth, that flies the flowing pen,  
 Will haunt the vacuous cup :  
 And others' follies teach us not  
 Nor much their wisdom teaches :  
 And most, of sterling worth is that  
 Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !  
 We know not what we know.  
 But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone :  
 'Tis gone, and let it go.  
 'Tis gone : a thousand such have slipped  
 Away from my embraces,  
 And fall'n into the dusty rye  
 Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betterment  
 Long since, and came no more :  
 With peals of genial clamour beat  
 From many a tavern-floor.  
 With twisted quirks and happy lore  
 From misty men of letters.  
 The tavern-hours of mighty men —  
 Thine elders and thy betterment.

Hours, when the Poet's words were true,  
 Had yet their native zest  
 Nor yet the fear of little things  
 Had made him talk for aye.

But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
 He flash'd his random speeches,  
 Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd  
 His literary leeches.

200

So mix for ever with the past,  
 Like all good things on earth !  
 For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,  
 At half thy real worth ?  
 I hold it good, good things should pass :  
 With time I will not quarrel :  
 It is but yonder empty glass  
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

---

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
 To which I most resort,  
 I too must part : I hold thee dear  
 For this good pint of port.  
 For this, thou shalt from all things suck  
 Marrow of mirth and laughter ;  
 And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

210

But thou wilt never move from hence,  
 The sphere thy fate allots :  
 Thy latter days increased with pence  
 Go down among the pots :  
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
 In haunts of hungry sinners,  
 Old boxes, larded with the steam  
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

220

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,  
 Would quarrel with our lot ;  
 Thy care is, under polish'd tins,  
 To serve the hot-and-hot ;

To come and go, and come again,  
 Returning like the pewit, 230  
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
 The thick-set hazel dies ;  
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread  
 The corners of thine eyes :  
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
 Our changeful equinoxes,  
 Till mellow Death, like some late guest,  
 Shall call thee from the boxes. 240

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease  
 To pace the gritted floor,  
 And, laying down an unctuous lease  
 Of life, shalt earn no more ;  
 No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,  
 Shall show thee past to Heaven :  
 But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,  
 A pint-pot neatly graven.

## XXII. LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,  
 And clouds are highest up in air,  
 Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
 To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn :  
 Lovers long-betroth'd were they :  
 They too will wed the morrow morn :  
 God's blessing on the day !

'He does not love me for my birth,  
 Nor for my lands so broad and fair ; 10  
 He loves me for my own true worth,  
 And that is well,' said Lady Clare.



In there came old Alice the nurse,  
 Said, 'Who was this that went from thee?'  
 'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare,  
 'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O God be thank'd!' said Alice the nurse,  
 'That all comes round so just and fair :  
 Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
 And you are *not* the Lady Clare.' 20

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?'  
 Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so wild?'  
 'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,  
 'I speak the truth : you are my child.'

'The old Earl's daughter died at my breast ;  
 I speak the truth, as I live by bread !  
 I buried her like my own sweet child,  
 And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
 O mother,' she said, 'if this be true, 30  
 To keep the best man under the sun  
 So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,  
 'But keep the secret for your life,  
 And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,  
 When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar horn,' she said,  
 'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.  
 Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,  
 And tling the diamond necklace by.' 40

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,  
 'But keep the secret all ye can.'  
 She said, 'Not so : but I will know  
 If there be any faith in man.'

‘Nay now, what faith?’ said Alice the nurse,  
‘The man will cleave unto his right.’  
‘And he shall have it,’ the lady replied,  
‘Tho’ I should die to-night.’

‘Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!  
Alas, my child, I sinn’d for thee.’ 50  
‘O mother, mother, mother,’ she said,  
‘So strange it seems to me.

‘Yet here’s a kiss for my mother dear,  
My mother dear, if this be so,  
And lay your hand upon my head,  
And bless me, mother, ere I go.’

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
She was no longer Lady Clare :  
She went by dale, and she went by down,  
With a single rose in her hair. 60

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought  
Leapt up from where she lay,  
Dropt her head in the maiden’s hand,  
And follow’d her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower :  
‘O Lady Clare, you shame your worth !  
Why come you drest like a village maid,  
That are the flower of the earth ?’

‘If I come drest like a village maid,  
I am but as my fortunes are : 70  
I am a beggar born,’ she said,  
‘And not the Lady Clare.’

‘Play me no tricks,’ said Lord Ronald,  
‘For I am yours in word and in deed.  
Play me no tricks,’ said Lord Ronald,  
‘Your riddle is hard to read.’



Of his vessel great in story,  
Wheresoe'er he came. 20  
So they past by capes and islands,  
Many a harbour-mouth,  
Sailing under palmy highlands  
Far within the South.  
On a day when they were going  
O'er the lone expanse,  
In the north, her canvas flowing,  
Rose a ship of France.  
Then the Captain's colour heighten'd,  
Joyful came his speech : 30  
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd  
In the eyes of each.  
'Chase,' he said : the ship flew forward,  
And the wind did blow ;  
Stately, lightly, went she Norward,  
Till she near'd the foe.  
Then they look'd at him they hated,  
Had what they desired ;  
Mute with folded arms they waited—  
Not a gun was fired. 40  
But they heard the foeman's thunder  
Roaring out their doom ;  
All the air was torn in sunder,  
Crashing went the boom,  
Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,  
Bullets fell like rain ;  
Over mast and deck were scatter'd  
Blood and brains of men.  
Spars were splinter'd ; decks were broken :  
Every mother's son— 50  
Down they dropt—no word was spoken—  
Each beside his gun.  
On the decks as they were lying,  
Were their faces grim.

In their blood, as they lay' dying,  
     Did they smile on him.  
 Those, in whom he had reliancee  
     For his noble name,  
 With one smile of still defiance  
     Sold him unto shame. 60  
 Shame and wrath his heart confounded,  
     Pale he turn'd and red,  
 Till himself was deadly wounded  
     Falling on the dead.  
 Dismal error ! fearful slaughter !  
     Years have wander'd by,  
 Side by side beneath the water  
     Crew and Captain lie ;  
 There the sunlit ocean tosses  
     O'er them mouldering, 70  
 And the lonely seabird crosses  
     With one waft of the wing.

## XXIV. THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

In her ear he whispers gaily,  
     ' If my heart by signs can tell,  
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,  
     And I think thou lov'st me well.'  
 She replies, in accents fainter,  
     ' There is none I love like thee.'  
 He is but a landscape-painter,  
     And a village maiden she.  
 He to lips, that fondly falter,  
     Presses his without reproof : 10  
 Leads her to the village altar,  
     And they leave her father's roof.  
 ' I can make no marriage present :  
     Little can I give my wife.

Love will make our cottage pleasant,  
And I love thee more than life.  
They by parks and lodges going  
See the lordly castles stand :  
Summer woods, about them blowing,  
Made a murmur in the land. 20  
From deep thought himself he rouses,  
Says to her that loves him well,  
' Let us see these handsome houses  
Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'  
So she goes by him attended,  
Hears him lovingly converse,  
Sees whatever fair and splendid  
Lay betwixt his home and hers ;  
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
Parks and order'd gardens great, 30  
Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
Built for pleasure and for state.  
All he shows her makes him dearer :  
Evermore she seems to gaze  
On that cottage growing nearer,  
Where they twain will spend their days.  
O but she will love him truly !  
He shall have a cheerful home ;  
She will order all things duly,  
When beneath his roof they come. 40  
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
Till a gateway she discerns  
With armorial bearings stately,  
And beneath the gate she turns ;  
Sees a mansion more majestic  
Than all those she saw before :  
Many a gallant gay domestic  
Bows before him at the door.  
And they speak in gentle murmur,  
When they answer to his call, 50

While he treads with footstep firmer,  
 Leading on from hall to hall.  
 And, while now she wonders blindly,  
 Nor the meaning can divine,  
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
 'All of this is mine and thine.'  
 Here he lives in state and bounty,  
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,  
 Not a lord in all the county  
 Is so great a lord as he. 60  
 All at once the colour flushes  
 Her sweet face from brow to chin :  
 As it were with shame she blushes,  
 And her spirit changed within.  
 Then her countenance all over  
 Pale again as death did prove :  
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
 And he cheer'd her soul with love.  
 So she strove against her weakness,  
 Tho' at times her spirit sank : 70  
 Shaped her heart with woman's meekness  
 To all duties of her rank :  
 And a gentle consort made he,  
 And her gentle mind was such  
 That she grew a noble lady,  
 And the people loved her much.  
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
 With the burthen of an honour  
 Unto which she was not born. 80  
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
 And she murmur'd, 'Oh, that he  
 Were once more that landscape-painter,  
 Which did win my heart from me !'  
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him,  
 Fading slowly from his side :

## XXIV. THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

105

Three fair children first she bore him,  
Then before her time she died.

Weeping, weeping late and early,

Walking up and pacing down,

90

Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,

Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.

And he came to look upon her,

And he look'd at her and said,

'Bring the dress and put it on her,

That she wore when she was wed.'

Then her people, softly treading,

Bore to earth her body, drest

In the dress that she was wed in,

That her spirit might have rest.

100

## XXV. THE VOYAGE

## I

We left behind the painted buoy

That tosses at the harbour-mouth ;

And madly danced our hearts with joy,

As fast we fled to the South :

How fresh was every sight and sound

On open main or winding shore !

We knew the merry world was round,

And we might sail for evermore.

## II

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,

Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail :

10

The Lady's-head upon the prow

Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.

The broad sea swell'd to meet the keel,

And swept behind ; so quick the run,

We felt the good ship shake and reel,

We seem'd to sail into the Sun !



## III

How oft we saw the Sun retire,  
 And burn the threshold of the night,  
 Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
 And sleep beneath his pillar'd light !  
 How oft the purple-skirted robe  
 Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
 As thro' the slumber of the globe  
 Again we dash'd into the dawn !

20

## IV

New stars all night above the brim  
 Of waters lighten'd into view ;  
 They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
 Changed every moment as we flew.  
 Far ran the naked moon across  
 The houseless ocean's heaving field,  
 Or flying shone, the silver boss  
 Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

30

## V

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
 High towns on hills were dimly seen,  
 We past long lines of Northern capes  
 And dewy Northern meadows green.  
 We came to warmer waves, and deep  
 Across the boundless east we drove,  
 Where those long swells of breaker sweep  
 The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

40

## VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
 Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine  
 With ashy rains, that spreading made  
 Fantastie plume or sable pine ;  
 By sands and steaming flats, and floods  
 Of mighty mouth, we seudded fast,

And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

## VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark ! 50  
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times  
With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;  
At times a carven craft would shoot  
From havens hid in fairy bowers,  
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,  
But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

## VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled  
Down the waste waters day and night,  
And still we follow'd where she led,  
In hope to gain upon her flight. 60  
Her face was evermore unseen,  
And fixt upon the far sea-line ;  
But each man murmur'd 'O my Queen,  
I follow till I make thee mine.'

## IX

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
Like Fancy made of golden air,  
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,  
Now high on waves that idly burst  
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea, 70  
And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
She bore the blade of Liberty.

## X

And only one among us—him  
We pleased not—he was seldom pleased :  
He saw not far : his eyes were dim :  
But ours he swore were all diseased.

‘ A ship of fools,’ he shriek’d in spite,  
 ‘ A ship of fools,’ he sneer’d and wept.  
 And overboard one stormy night  
 He cast his body, and on we swept.

80

## XI

And never sail of ours was furl’d,  
 Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;  
 We lov’d the glories of the world,  
 But laws of nature were our scorn.  
 For blasts would rise and rave and cease,  
 But whence were those that drove the sail  
 Across the whirlwind’s heart of peace,  
 And to and thro’ the counter gale ?

## XII

Again to colder climes we came,  
 For still we follow’d where she led :  
 Now mate is blind and captain lame,  
 And half the crew are sick or dead,  
 But, blind or lame or sick or sound,  
 We follow that which flies before :  
 We know the merry world is round,  
 And we may sail for evermore.

90

## XXVI. SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

## A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balancee joy and pain,  
 With tears and smiles from heaven again  
 The maiden Spring upon the plain  
 Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.  
 In crystal vapour everywhere  
 Blue isles of heaven laugh’d between,  
 And far, in forest-deeps unseen,

The topmost elm-trees gather'd green  
 From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song : 10

Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :

Sometimes the sparhawk, wheel'd along,

Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :

By grassy capes with fuller sound

In curves the yellowing river ran,

And drooping chestnut-buds began

To spread into the perfect fan,

Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,

Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere 20

Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,

With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring :

A gown of grass-green silk she wore,

Buckled with golden clasps before ;

A light-green tuft of plumes she bore

Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,

Now by some tinkling rivulet,

In mosses mixt with violet 30

Her cream-white mule his pastern set :

And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains

Than she whose elfin prancer springs

By night to eery warblings,

When all the glimmering moorland rings

With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,

The happy winds upon her play'd,

Blowing the ringlet from the braid :

She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd 40

The rein with dainty finger-tips,

A man had given all other bliss,  
And all his worldly worth for this,  
To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
Upon her perfect lips.

### XXVII. A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
Thy tribute wave deliver :  
No more by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
A rivulet then a river :  
No where by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,  
And here thine aspen shiver ;  
And here by thee will hum the bee,  
For ever and for ever.

10

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
A thousand moons will quiver ;  
But not by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

### XXVIII. THE BEGGAR MAID

Her arms across her breast she laid ;  
She was more fair than words can say :  
Bare-footed came the beggar maid  
Before the king Cophetua.  
In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
To meet and greet her on her way ;  
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,  
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
She in her poor attire was seen :  
One praised her ancles, one her eyes,  
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.  
So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
In all that land had never been :  
Cophetua sware a royal oath :  
‘This beggar maid shall be my queen !’

10

## XXIX. THE EAGLE

## FRAGMENT

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands ;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.  
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

## XXX.

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave  
Yon orange sunset waning slow :  
From fringes of the faded eve,  
O, happy planet, eastward go ;  
Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
To glass herself in dewy eyes  
That watch me from the glen below.  
Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
Dip forward under starry light,  
And move me to my marriage-morn,  
And round again to happy night.

10

## XXXI.

COME not, when I am dead,  
 To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,  
 To trample round my fallen head,  
 And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.  
 There let the wind sweep and the plover cry ;  
 But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime  
 I care no longer, being all unblest :  
 Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,  
 And I desire to rest. 10  
 Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie :  
 Go by, go by.

## XXXII. THE LETTERS

## I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,  
 A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,  
 I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
 And saw the altar cold and bare.  
 A clog of lead was round my feet,  
 A band of pain across my brow ;  
 'Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet  
 Before you hear my marriage vow.'

## II

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song  
 That mock'd the wholesome human heart, 10  
 And then we met in wrath and wrong.  
 We met, but only meant to part.  
 Full cold my greeting was and dry ;  
 She faintly smiled, she hardly moved ;  
 I saw with half-unconscious eye  
 She wore the colours I approved.

## III

She took the little ivory chest,  
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,  
Then raised her head with lips comprest,  
And gave my letters back to me. 20  
And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
My gifts, when gifts of mine could please ;  
As looks a father on the things  
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

## IV

She told me all her friends had said ;  
I raged against the public liar ;  
She talked as if her love were dead,  
But in my words were seeds of fire.  
'No more of love ; your sex is known :  
I never will be twice deceived. 30  
Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
The woman cannot be believed.

## V

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell—  
And women's slander is the worst,  
And you, whom once I lov'd so well,  
Thro' you, my life will be accurst.'  
I spoke with heart, and heat and force,  
I shook her breast with vague alarms—  
Like torrents from a mountain source  
We rush'd into each other's arms. 40

## VI

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the stars,  
And sweet the vapour-braided blue,  
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
As homeward by the church I drew.



The very graves appear'd to smile,  
 So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells;  
 'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,  
 There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

## XXXIII. THE VISION OF SIN

## I

I HAD a vision when the night was late :  
 A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.  
 He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,  
 But that his heavy rider kept him down.  
 And from the palace came a child of sin,  
 And took him by the curls, and led him in,  
 Where sat a company with heated eyes,  
 Expecting when a fountain should arise :  
 A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—  
 As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,  
 Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—  
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,  
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

## II

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,  
 Gathering up from all the lower ground ;  
 Narrowing in to where they sat assembled  
 Low voluptuous music winding trembled,  
 Wov'n in circles : they that heard it sigh'd,  
 Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,  
 Swung themselves, and in low tones replied ;  
 Till the fountain spouted, showering wide  
 Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;  
 Then the music touch'd the gates and died ;  
 Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,  
 Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale ;

Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,  
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,  
The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd and palpitated ;  
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
Caught the sparkles, and in circles, 30  
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,  
Flung the torrent rainbow round :  
Then they started from their places,  
Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
Half-invisible to the view,  
Wheeling with precipitate paces  
To the melody, till they flew,  
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,  
Twisted hard in fierce embraces, 40  
Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
Dash'd together in blinding dew :  
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,  
The nerve-dissolving melody  
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

## III

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,  
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :  
I saw that very morning, far withdrawn  
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn, 50  
Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,  
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,  
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
Came floating on for many a month and year,  
Unheeded : and I thought I would have spoken,  
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late :  
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,  
When that cold vapour touch'd the palace gate,  
And link'd again. I saw within my head

A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,  
 Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,  
 And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :      60

## IV

' Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !  
 Here is custom come your way ;  
 Take my brute, and lead him in,  
 Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

' Bitter barnaid, waning fast !  
 See that sheets are on my bed ;  
 What ! the flower of life is past :  
 It is long before you wed.      70

' Slipshod waiter, lank and sour,  
 At the Dragon on the heath !  
 Let us have a quiet hour,  
 Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

' I am old, but let me drink ;  
 Bring me spices, bring me wine ;  
 I remember, when I think,  
 That my youth was half divine.

' Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,  
 When a blanket wraps the day,      80  
 When the rotten woodland drips,  
 And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

' Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
 Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :  
 What care I for any name ?  
 What for order or degree ?

' Let me screw thee up a peg :  
 Let me loose thy tongue with wine :  
 Callest thou that thing a leg ?  
 Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?      90

'Thou shalt not be saved by works :

Thou hast been a sinner too :

Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,

Empty scarecrows, I and you !

'Fill the cup, and fill the can :

Have a rouse before the morn :

Every moment dies a man,

Every moment one is born.

'We are men of ruin'd blood ;

Therefore comes it we are wise.

100

Fish are we that love the mud,

Rising to no fancy-flies.

'Name and fame ! to fly sublime

Thro' the courts, the camps, the schools,

Is to be the ball of Time,

Bandied by the hands of fools.

'Friendship !—to be two in one—

Let the canting liar pack !

Well I know, when I am gone,

How she mouths behind my back.

110

'Virtue !—to be good and just—

Every heart, when sifted well,

Is a clot of warmer dust,

Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

'O ! we two as well can look

Whited thought and cleanly life

As the priest, above his book

Leering at his neighbour's wife.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can :

Have a rouse before the morn :

120

Every moment dies a man,

Every moment one is born.

‘Drink, and let the parties rave :  
They are fill’d with idle spleen ;  
Rising, falling, like a wave,  
For they know not what they mean.

‘He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant’s power ;  
And the tyrant’s cruel glee  
Forces on the freer hour.

130

‘Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

‘Greet her with applausive breath,  
Freedom, gaily doth she tread ;  
In her right a civic wreath,  
In her left a human head.

‘No, I love not what is new ;  
She is of an ancient house :  
And I think we know the hue  
Of that cap upon her brows.

140

‘Let her go ! her thirst she slakes  
Where the bloody conduit runs,  
Then her sweetest meal she makes  
On the first-born of her sons.

‘Drink to lofty hopes that cool—  
Visions of a perfect State :  
Drink we, last, the public fool,  
Frantic love and frantic hate.

150

‘Chant me now some wicked stave,  
Till thy drooping courage rise,  
And the glow-worm of the grave  
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

'Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;  
Set thy hoary fancies free ;  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savours well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,  
When thy nerves could understand 160  
What there is in loving tears,  
And the warmth of hand in hand.

'Tell me tales of thy first love—  
April hopes, the fools of chance ;  
Till the graves begin to move,  
And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again. 170

'Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chap-fallen circle spreads :  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

'You are bones, and what of that ?  
Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex !  
Tread a measure on the stones, 180  
Madam—if I know your sex,  
From the fashion of your bones.

'No, I cannot praise the fire  
In your eye—nor yet your lip :  
All the more do I admire  
Joints of cunning workmanship.



At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
 Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?' 220

To which an answer peal'd from that high land,  
 But in a tongue no man could understand ;  
 And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn  
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

## XXXIV. TO —

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

'Cursed be he that moves my bones'

*Shakespeare's Epitaph*

You might have won the Poet's name,  
 If such be worth the winning now,  
 And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
 Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
 A life that moves to gracious ends  
 Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
 A deedful life, a silent voice :

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom  
 Of those that wear the Poet's crown : 10  
 Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
 Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,  
 Nor leave his music as of old,  
 But round him ere he scarce be cold  
 Begins the scandal and the cry :

'Proclaim the faults he would not show :  
 Break lock and seal : betray the trust :  
 Keep nothing sacred : 'tis but just  
 The many-headed beast should know.' 20



Ah shameless ! for he did but sing  
 A song that pleased us from its worth ;  
 No public life was his on earth,  
 No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best :  
 His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
 My Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave  
 Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
 The little life of bank and brier,  
 The bird that pipes his lone desire  
 And dies unheard within his tree,

30

Than he that warbles long and loud  
 And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
 For whom the carrion vulture waits  
 To tear his heart before the crowd !

## XXXV.

## TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
 Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
 The long divine Peneian pass,  
 The vast Akrokerannian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
 With such a pencil, such a pen,  
 You shadow forth to distant men,  
 I read and felt that I was there :

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
 And track'd you still on classic ground,  
 I grew in gladness till I found  
 My spirits in the golden age.

10

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
And glisten'd—here and there alone  
The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown  
By fountain-urns ;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
Of cavern pillars ; on the swell  
The silver lily heaved and fell ;  
And many a slope was rich in bloom

20

From him that on the mountain lea  
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks  
To him who sat upon the rocks,  
And fluted to the morning sea.

---

XXXVI.

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold/gray stones, O Sea !  
And I would/that my tongue/could utter/  
The thoughts/that arise/in me!

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play !  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill ;  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still !

10

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

## XXXVII. THE POET'S SONG

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He pass'd by the town and out of the street,  
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,  
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,  
The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,  
And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
And the nightingale thought, 'I have sung many songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away.'

# NOTES

## I. THE EPIC.

WRITTEN as an introduction to the *Morte d'Arthur* when that poem was first published in 1842. Tennyson seems to have felt that a fragmentary poem dealing with remote times and in a manner remote from the present ('faint Homeric echoes') needed some sort of apology or explanation; just as he wrote an explanatory 'Prologue' and 'Épilogue' for his version of *The Sleeping Beauty* (No. XVI.).

3. sacred bush, mistletoe, held sacred by the ancient Druids.

5. wassail, Anglo-Saxon *wes hael*, 'Be hale,' 'A health to you,' so the liquor used for the drinking of healths.

10. cutting eights, figure-skating.

14. taking ... wider sweeps, metaphor from skating.

16. hawking at, properly 'attacking on the wing,' as the hawk attacks smaller birds.

Geology, which was leading men to reject the old idea, based on the acceptance of the first chapter of *Genesis* as a literal record of fact, that the world was created in six periods of twenty-four hours.

31. "Said in such a way that it amounted to nothing."

38. Remodel models. Re-shape Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, which is itself a work of literature, not merely material for literature.

50. Said to be an excellent description (conscious or unconscious) of Tennyson reading his own poems.

## II. MORTE D'ARTHUR.

FOUNDED on Sir Thomas Malory's romance with that title, printed by Caxton in 1485. The story of Arthur, the great legendary king of early Britain (sixth century), has naturally had a fascination for English poets. Spenser made 'Prince Arthure' the type of 'Magnificence' (i.e. noble deeds) in his

*Faerie Queene*; Milton thought of making him the subject of his great epic. The Arthurian legends interested Tennyson during many years. Thus we have *Sir Galahad* (xix.), *Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere* (xxvi.), *The Lady of Shalott* and *The Glean*, besides his epic devoted to Arthur, *The Idylls of the King*, in the last book of which, *The Passing of Arthur*, the fragmentary poem of 1842 was finally incorporated.

As to the meaning, Tennyson seems to have had some notion of an allegory in his mind, which grew stronger as he proceeded with the composition of the *Idylls*. King Arthur was to typify

"Sense at war with Soul,  
Ideal manhood closed in real man,  
Rather than that gray king, whose name, a ghost,  
Streams like a cloud, wan-shaped, from mountain peak  
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still."

But such allegorical ideas—dominant in *The Holy Grail* and in *Gareth and Lynette*—are not of great importance in the *Morte d'Arthur*, which should be read primarily for the beauty of the story and the landscape and the haunting melody of the verse. A work of such exquisite loveliness does not need 'modern touches' to 'redeem it from the charge of nothingness.' By 'modern touches' (l. 278) Tennyson probably meant the truths about prayer and obedience, and the lesson of the old order passing into the new. This lesson needs to be taken to heart by the older men of each generation, though a young reader can hardly enter into its full meaning. A better name for such things than 'modern touches' would be 'truths for all time': they are woven into the stuff of all true poetry, however remote its subject from the present, except when it is purely decorative, and they are what Matthew Arnold had in mind when he called poetry 'a criticism of life.'

In speaking of King Arthur as 'come again' in the epilogue (l. 296) Tennyson implies the belief of the Christian poet that the true Golden Age does not lie in the past but in the future. Cp. *The Golden Year* (xi.) and *The Poet's Song* (xxxvii.); and with the reference to Christmas in the last line, ep. the splendid lyric in *In Memoriam*, "Ring out, wild bells to the wild sky" (No. 106), especially the concluding line, "Ring in the Christ that is to be."

3. King Arthur's table, the name given to the order of knight-hood founded by King Arthur, from the Round Table at which his knights sat for meals.

4. Lyonesse, a fabulous country said to have stretched out westwards from Cornwall and to have been subsequently submerged by the sea. There is a tradition in the west of England that the Scilly Isles were once part of the mainland.

10. strait, properly an adjective, 'narrow'; as a substantive it is generally used of the sea, but here applied to the land.

14. sequel of to-day, what follows to-day's battle.  
unsolders, disunites, breaks up.

16. Such a sleep, so deep a sleep—i.e. death.

21. Camelot, the legendary capital of King Arthur, identified by Sir Thomas Malory (wrongly) with Winchester. Tennyson probably imagined it as having existed somewhere in Somerset.

23. Merlin, the great enchanter of the Arthurian legends.

27. Excalibur, the name of Arthur's magic sword, interpreted by Malory to mean 'Cut-steel.'

31. samite, rich silk stuff interwoven with gold.

43. hest, command.

60. A translation of Virgil's line, *Aeneid*, iv. 285: "Atque animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc."

70-71. Observe how finely the lines reproduce the two different sounds. Malory's words are: "I saw nothing but the waters wap (i.e. beat) and the waves wan."

75. fealty, fidelity.

80. lief, beloved.

102. joust, a tournament or sham fight.

104. maiden of the Lake. "With that they saw a damsel going on the lake. What damsel is that? said Arthur. That is the Lady of the Lake, said Merlin; and within that lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a palace as any on earth" (Malory's account of Arthur's first meeting with this lady).

110. clouded with his own conceit, confused by his own false notion.

136. wheel'd, swung. brand, sword: ep. XIX. 6.

139. northern morn, Aurora Borealis.

140. moving isles of winter, icebergs.

171. regarded, looked at.

193. hove (Malory's word), was lying.

196. dense, crowded.

197. Black-stoled, wearing long black robes.

198. Three Queens. Cp. *The Coming of Arthur*, 275:

"Three fair Queens  
Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends  
Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright  
Sweet faces, who will help him at his need."

199. shiver'd to the tingling stars, "thrilled as it n

through the air and reached the stars that trembled in response" (Rowe and Webb).

209. casque, helmet.

214. the springing east, the rising sun.

215. greaves, leg-armour; cuisses, thigh-armour.

drops of onset, splashes of blood from the attack on the foe.

218. dais-throne, throne on a raised platform at the end of a hall.

224. lists, space enclosed for a tournament: cp. XIX. 9, 'clanging lists.'

233. The holy Elders, the magi led by the star to make their offering to the infant Saviour.

251. blind life, without the light of reason.

259. Avilion, otherwise called Avalon. Cp. *The Palace of Art*, l. 105:

" Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
And watch'd by weeping queens."

Tradition places Avilion in the neighbourhood of Glastonbury in Somerset, to which Joseph of Arimathea is said to have brought the Holy Grail, the cup from which our Lord drank at the last supper with his disciples. Tennyson's description of 'the island-valley' recalls classical descriptions of the fabulous Islands of the Blessed.

263. crown'd with summer sea. As one looks up the valley, one sees the summer sea shining between and above the trees, at the horizon.

267. fluting, singing with clear notes as of a flute.

268. plume, plumage.

295. port, carriage, bearing.

### III. THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER.

THE story is slight, but the poem lives through its exquisite descriptions of English landscape, its loving observation of nature, and the felicity of some of its phrases, 'jewels five words long.' Tennyson himself felt that it might be censured for excess of ornament (*Life*, i. 197), but defended the language by saying that the speaker was an artist. He also pointed out that, the whole style of the poem being ornate, he had been bound to make the description of the Gardener's Daughter especially elaborate, as it was essential that she should form the central picture (ll. 124-139).

15. moons, months.

19. found, establish.

28. This was the line that delighted the old bachelor in Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford* (chap. 4) by its accurate observation of Nature : he had lived all his life in the country without noticing that ash-buds were black in March "till this young man comes and tells me."

40-47. The picture seems to have been suggested by the meadows at Lincoln.

47. murmurous wings, bees attracted by the sweet scent of the lime-trees.

73. orbit of the memory. The path of a man's conscious life between birth and death is likened to the path of a planet through space : cp. *In Memoriam*, xlv.-xlvii.

108. courted, invited.

111. lilac-ambush. The compound does not occur elsewhere. It is a variation from 'lilac-bush' meant to suggest thick bushes which could afford concealment.

116. momentarily, every moment.

136. Hebe, the Greek goddess of Youth and cup-bearer to the gods.

161. Love's white star, Venus.

167. Flora, a famous portrait by Titian.

179. The sliding season, the passing hour. Cp. l. 262.

181. A reminiscence of Theocritus, xv. 104-5. So Mrs. Brown-ing writes (*Sonnets from the Portuguese*)—

"I thought how once Theocritus had sung  
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,  
Who each one in a gracious hand appears  
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young."

186. (neither) squall nor storm.

195. The daughters of the year, the seasons.

203. 'I will,' his answer in the marriage-ceremony.

235. "Rose by minute steps till all steps were passed."

258. glooming, evening ; crescent-lit, lit by the crescent moon.

266. day, daylight.

#### IV. DORA.

FOUNDED on a story in Mrs. Mitford's *Our Village*.

This is the most Wordsworthian of all Tennyson's idylls, and by the perfection of its simplicity moved the warm admiration



of Wordsworth himself. FitzGerald compared it as a pastoral with the biblical story of Ruth. Observe the great simplicity of the language and rhythm, and the absence of all ornament, which could only have weakened the pathos of the bare recital of moving facts.

An interesting criticism (not altogether favourable) of *Dora*, and comparison of it with Wordsworth's *Michael* and Tennyson's own *Enoch Arden* will be found in Stopford Brooke, ch. xi.

## V. AUDLEY COURT.

THIS idyll includes two unrhymed songs: something of the effect of rhyme is given by the recurring lines, so that a careless reader of the verses might easily fail to notice that they were unrhymed. The description at the close of the poem is of Torquay as it was in Tennyson's youth, "the loveliest sea-village in England."

Of this and the two following poems, "three sketches of quiet strolling through English fields," Sir A. Lyall writes that they "lap us in the caressing air of rural England at its best."

13. aftermath, the second mowing.

14. griffin-guarded, guarded by stone griffins.

15. pillar'd dusk, shady trees with stems like pillars.

sounding, from the wind in their leaves and branches.

33. The four-field system, or Norfolk system, of rotation of crops.

34. corn-laws, imposing heavy duty on importation of foreign corn; they were abolished in 1846.

35. "Found ourselves in agreement again on the question of the king's prerogatives."

37. pippin, apple-tree.

## VI. WALKING TO THE MAIL.

12. broken, bankrupt.

13. "Vex'd with a melancholy that possessed him like an evil spirit and made him see the world covered with a sickly hue that was the reflection of his own distemper." Cp. 'jaundiced eye,' xiv. 132.

15. commercing, holding intercourse—a Miltonic word.

25. youngster, young fellow, youngster. tickling, catching with the hand; a method of poaching in small streams.

26. in flagrante delicto, in the actual commission of the crime, literally 'with the crime blazing.'

33. tilt, the cloth covering of the cart.
59. this bill, the Reform Bill of 1832, which would seem to an old Tory like 'the letting in of waters.'
63. A Chartist pike, a weapon prepared for use by the Revolutionary party known as Chartists. For many years (in the 'thirties' and 'forties') there were fears of a secret rising.
68. blazon'd, with coats of arms.
76. flayflint, skinflint, mean person.
91. Niobe, whose children were all slain by Apollo and Diana and herself turned to stone; the classical type of bereaved motherhood.
92. unfarrow'd, without her farrow or litter.

## VII. EDWIN MORRIS.

3. drouth, drought, dryness.
15. cure, cure (*i.e.* care) of souls, curacy.
17. agaric, mushrooms and other fungi.
21. Crichton, James, known as "the Admirable Crichton," a young Scotsman of the sixteenth century who visited the French and Italian universities, and won a fabulous reputation for his skill in languages and philosophy, and his many other accomplishments. He was killed in Italy in his twenty-third year.
22. finish'd to the finger nail. A Latin expression to denote perfection, from the sculptor passing his finger-nail over the surface of the finished statue to test its smoothness.
29. one honeymoon to that, "with one more month—the month after marriage—added."
30. sennight, week, 'seven-night,' as 'fortnight' is 'fourteen-night.'
37. either twilight, dawn and dusk.
52. "You take too low a view, do not idealise love. I have momentary inspirations, and can understand what Edwin means, though I have not attained to his height myself."
80. The reference is to the "Aeme and Septimius" of Catullus (xlv. 8-9). "When he had said this, Love sneezed his good-will on the right, as he had sneezed his good-will on the left before" (Prof. R. Ellis's translation). Sneezing was considered a good omen among the Greeks and Romans, and in other ages it has been a custom to say "God bless you!" or the like words, when a person has sneezed.
95. holms, river-islands or low tracts of rich land by the side of a river,

97. clerk, clergyman.

101. In our prosaic modern days the power that directs marriage is no longer the god Cupid but material considerations, typified by 'a lawyer's clerk': cp. ll. 126-7.

105. Elle vous suit, French, 'She follows you.'

110. Sweet-Gale, a sweet-smelling shrub that grows in marshy places.

112. Proserpine, daughter of Ceres, carried off by Pluto whilst she was gathering flowers at Enna in Sicily, and made queen of the lower world.

122. cotton-spinning chorus: see l. 10, 'New-comers from the Mersey.'

124. hands of wild rejection, waving me wildly away.

130. They induced a man to whom I owed money to get up a case against me.

132. a mystic token, a writ issued in the King's name and addressed to the Sheriff.

141. but this, but for this.

145. prime, early.

### VIII. ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ONE of the most really dramatic of Tennyson's poems: he here enters into feelings, reproduces for us a view of life, entirely remote from his own. (Splendid examples of this kind of study will be found in many of Browning's *Men and Women*.)

For an account of St. Simeon Stylites ("St. Simeon of the Pillar"), a Syrian monk of the fifth century, see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. 37.

11. Thrice multiplied, made three times as long.

14. Like a portent seen midway between sky and earth.

48. (that) hath suffer'd.

51. boil'd in oil, the death from which St. John the Divine was said to have been miraculously preserved.

74. Inswathed, wrapped round and round with.

101. lethargies, times of drowsiness.

130. register'd and calendar'd, recorded in the calendar of the Church, which appoints a day on which they are to be commemorated.

157. mortal archives, the records of my life on earth.

163. rime, hoar-frost.

165. Pontius, Pilate; Iscariot, Judas.

166. show'd, appeared.

169. Abaddon and Asmodeus, princes of darkness mentioned in *Revelation*, ix. 11.

## IX. THE TALKING OAK.

A YOUNG Englishman tells his love-story to an old oak-tree in an English park and imagines the oak-tree as answering him. Incidents from the different periods of English history through which the oak has lived are delightfully interwoven.

4. chace, ground stored with game, park.

19. plagiarised, stole.

23. garrulously given, given to talking.

45-8. The dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII.

47. spence, buttery, place for provisions : ep. *dis-pense*.

51. his man-minded offset, his daughter with the mind of a man—Elizabeth.

55. the gloomy brewer. Cromwell was nicknamed 'the brewer' by the Royalists because he was descended (remotely) from Morgan Williams, described as "an ale-brewer and inn-keeper." He died on Sept. 3, 1658, the anniversary of his victories at Dunbar and Woreester and the day after a memorable storm.

63. teacup-times, the days of Queen Anne, when tea was a fashionable luxury. Cp. Pope :

"Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey  
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes Tea."

64. patch, a small piece of silk stuck on the face as an adornment. The practice is ridiculed in Addison's Essays.

65. love-knots, bows of ribbon tied in a peculiar way as a token of love.

67. modish, fashionable.

68. shrill'd, shot with a shrill noise.

tinsel, with more show than reality about it.

83. The oak adds a ring to his circumference each year, and his age can be determined by counting the rings.

123. holt, wood.

183. vapid, spiritless, flat and dull.

184. anthers, the essential part of the stamen of a plant containing the pollen.

257. overset, tumble over.

266. throats, of birds.

266. "May all stars in their transit at their highest point of altitude drop healing dews upon you!" The old belief was that dew came from the stars. Cp. Moore's line, "At the mid-hour of night, *when stars are weeping*, I fly."

286. Dryad. In Greek mythology oaks were supposed to be inhabited by nymphs called Dryads: cp. ll. 185-8.

292-4. The oak-tree of Dodona in Thessaly was sacred to Zeus and gave oracles by the whispering of its leaves.

297. the younger Charles, after his defeat at Worcester in 1651.

## X. LOVE AND DUTY.

"Two love one another, whom duty forbids to fulfil their love. Was the love fruitless, did it turn to dust? Because passion was denied, were two lives ruined? No, is the answer of Tennyson. Because duty was lord over passion and drove their lives apart, love itself, honoured more in giving up than in taking an earthly joy contrary to righteousness, lasted in both hearts, unstained and lovely, and bettered both their lives. The man, emerging from himself, gained the higher love, and never knew 'The sot gray life, and apathetic end.' The woman know, when the parting was over, that 'all Life needs for life is possible to will.' And happiness came to her, and freedom, and the distant light was pure" (Stopford Brooke).

10. he, Love.

49. thy bride, *i.e.* duty.

56. See note on III. 181.

71-4. A wonderful description of one of those moments that, from the intensity of the life lived in them, seem like years.

74. in station, without onward movement.

82. pathos, suffering.

95-8. These lines, whilst thoroughly characteristic of Tennyson, recall 'the grand style' of Milton in cadence and imagery.

97. the mounded rack, banks of drifting, broken clouds.

## XI. THE GOLDEN YEAR.

THE ancient poets often spoke of a Golden Age of happiness and innocence in the remote past, from which the world had gradually declined. Virgil alone in antiquity sang in his Fourth Eclogue of a Golden Age that was still to come; and it was partly this tone of prophecy that led Dante and others in the Middle Ages to think of him as an unconscious Christian. The central

part of the present idyll is a little unrhymed song that may be regarded as a sort of nineteenth-century variation of the same theme—the prophecy of a Golden Age that is to be brought about, not (as Virgil imagined) by the cessation of commerce, but by the peaceful growth of commerce binding the nations together. This was a favourite hope of the generation that established Free Trade in England, and we shall meet the same idea again in *Locksley Hall* (xiv.), 119-130.

11. Modern readers ask for quantity, not quality. Cp. xxi. 199-200.

21. measured, metrical.

25. returning on themselves, in allusion to the ancient doctrine that the history of the world moves through a cycle of years, every such cycle making up a Great Year (*Magnus Annus*).

32-40. In the golden year wealth will be more equally distributed, but men will not all be reduced (as in socialistic and communistic schemes) to one dead level.

42-6. The ships of Christian lands are to spread abroad the religion of Christ, the Bible and the literature of civilisation. They are to unite the nations by a peaceful commerce under a system of universal Free Trade.

63. O'erflourish'd with, overgrown with.

75. slate-quarry, at Llauberis. Note how wonderfully the effect of the sharp repeated echo of blasting operations is given in the last two lines.

## XII. ULYSSES.

THE noblest of all Tennyson's classical poems. It was the reading of this in 1845 that induced Sir Robert Peel to award the poet a pension of £200 a year "as a mark of royal favour to one who had devoted to worthy objects great intellectual powers." "*Ulysses*," Tennyson himself said, "was written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and gave my feeling about the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life, perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*." (*Life*, i. p. 196). So the poem may be read as a kind of allegory. It was in this spirit that Carlyle accepted it, writing to Tennyson soon after the volume was published: "And so let us all smite rhythmically, all in concert, 'the sounding furrows'; and sail forward with new cheer, 'beyond the sunset,' whither we are bound." But we may apply the poem in many ways. For one thing, it might be regarded as a splendid defence of that spirit of heroic adventure which has brought England to greatness.

The tone of the poem should be contrasted with that of the *Lotos-Eaters*, in which the unworthy comrades of Ulysses, weary

of "ever climbing up the climbing wave," give themselves up to "long rest, or death, dark death or dreamful ease."

The tradition of Ulysses' last voyage, of which there is only a hint in Homer's *Odyssey*, appears in Dante's *Inferno*, canto xxvi., on which passage Tennyson's poem is based. Of individual passages, several are from Homer ("windy Troy," "sitting well in order smite The sounding furrows"), and others are reminiscent of Homer, Shakespeare and Milton. But he who knows best the sources of the ideas and language will be most strongly impressed with the originality of Tennyson.

1. king. Ulysses was king of the island of Ithaca.

3. aged wife, Penelope.

4. Unequal, because his subjects are not advanced enough to receive the 'equal laws' of civilisation.

10. Hyades, a group of stars with the rising and setting of which the ancients associated storm and rain.

16. peers, equals.

17. ringing, echoing to the clash of armour.

20. The horizon, which looks like the margin of the world, recedes before us as we advance: it is the same with the horizon of our experience.

29. suns, years.

40. decent, creditably careful (Rowe and Webb).

47. frolic, adj., joyous (German, *fröhlich*).

48. opposed (to them), confronted them with.

60. the baths Of all the western stars, as the heavens were believed to revolve round the earth and the stars to set into the western sea.

62. gulfs, whirlpools.

63. Happy Isles, the Isles of the Blessed (after death), supposed to lie in the western ocean.

### XIII. TITHONUS.

ACCORDING to the Greek legend, Aurora, goddess of Dawn, was enamoured of a young man, Tithonus, and asked Zeus, king of the gods, to give him immortality. Her request was granted, but the boon was vain, for he was not given immortal youth.

Observe the force of the repetitions in the first line, and again in lines 21-22, 66-67: they enhance the effect given by the slow measured movement of the metre throughout—an effect of utter world-weariness. Twice only for a few lines is the metre quickened a little (37-42, 56-63) as Tithonus recalls the lost emotion of youth. But the weariness is stately, as of one who has mixed with gods.

7. limit, the eastern horizon.  
 13. that, so that.  
 18. Hours, three sisters, attendants on the gods. All-conquering Time has wasted Tithonus.  
 30. goal of ordinance, goal ordained by fate.  
 39. the wild team, the horses that draw the chariot of the Dawn.  
 49. Aristotle (*Eth. N.* vi. 2, 6) quotes a saying to this effect from the Greek poet Agathon.  
 53. lucid, bright.  
 63. Ilion, Troy, built for Laomedon, the father of Tithonus, by the gods Neptune and Apollo. The stones were said to have moved into their places to the sound of Apollo's lute. Cp. *Cenone*, 39-41 :  
     " As yonder walls  
     Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
     A cloud that gather'd shape."  
 71. barrows, burial-mounds.  
 75. "I, dust returned to dust in my grave, shall forget . . ."

#### XIV. LOCKSLEY HALL.

THE hero is imaginary and must not be identified with Tennyson, though some of the expressions may represent the poet's own feelings, and many have often been quoted apart from their context as if the poet were responsible for them. "In *Locksley Hall*," writes Sir A. Lyall, "we are confronted by the irresolute figure of modern youth, depressed and bewildered by his own inability to face the bustling competition of ordinary English life, disappointed in love, denouncing a shallow-hearted cousin, and nursing a momentary impulse to

' Wander far away,

On from island unto island at the gateways of the day."

Restlessness, *ennui*, impatience of humdrum existence, set him dreaming of something like a new Odyssey. But the hero of Locksley Hall is no Ulysses; the bonds of culture and comfort are too strong for him; the project of wild adventure is abandoned as quickly as it is formed; he remains to console himself with the march of mind and the wonders of scientific discovery."

Among the excellences of the poem may be noted (1) the wonderful descriptions of the Lincolnshire coast contrasted with skilful descriptive touches of tropical scenery, (2) the numerous



'modern touches' expressing in poetical form the ideas and inventions of the nineteenth century, (3) the splendid swing of the metre, his own invention—"rhymed couplets, passionate and picturesque, which follow one another like waves, each of them running directly to its point" (Lyall).

*Maud* is a longer study of a similar character to that of the young man in *Locksley Hall*; and in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, the poet, in his own old age, portrayed the old age to which such youth might be expected to lead.

8-9. Orion and the Pleiads, the constellations that are mentioned together in the *Book of Job*, ix. 9 and xxxviii. 31, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?"

14. closed, enclosed, contained within itself.

19. iris, rainbow hues.

32. golden sands. The expression conveys an idea both of the delightfulness of the hours and the speed with which they slipped away.

33-4. Love so filled my life that I forgot myself in my absorption in my love.

.36. throng'd my pulses, made them beat fast.

62. straiten'd, narrow.

69. "Is there any comfort in remembering some things and forgetting others?"

75. the poet sings, Dante, *Inferno*, v. 121-3.

77. thy, addressed to Amy.

79. he, the husband.

82. widow'd, left desolate.

85. an eye, the remembered look of the rejected lover.

105. helps, heals.

107. turn that earlier page, go back to my early ambition; ep. ll. 11-16.

108. Mother-Age, the present Age whose child I am.

109. pulsation, beating of the heart.

121. argosies, properly 'ships of Ragusa,' a poetical word for large merchantmen richly laden. The invention of the balloon, seeming to promise the early conquest of the air, greatly interested Tennyson. The first stanza of *A Dream of Fair Women* originally ran:

"As when a man that sails in a balloon,  
Down-looking sees the solid shining ground  
Stream from beneath him in the broad blue noon,  
Tilt, hamlet, mead and mound."

122. The ships of the future are seen in the air, coming from the west through 'the purple twilight' and dropping down upon the land.

123. ghastly dew, of blood. It is hardly necessary to point out how much nearer the possible fulfilment of this prediction has been brought by the inventions of the twentieth century.

128. of man, of all humanity.

133. Cp. *Hamlet*, i. v. 189 :

"The time is out of joint : O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right."

135. The march of democracy.

138. process of the suns, advance of the years.

142. The levelling tendency of democratic movements.

153. "Here, where nature is suppressed by the artificiality of life, a woman's natural emotions are nothing."

154. Orient, the East.

155. Mahratta-battle, war with the Mahrattas, the great native confederacy that dominated India in the eighteenth century and was conquered by the English in three wars, the last of which ended in 1818.

162. trailer, a hanging plant.

178. foremost files, front ranks.

180. Ajalon. See *Joshua*, x. 12: "Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon."

182. This line originally ran "*Let the peoples spin for ever . . .*" A slight alteration has wonderfully increased its force. An interesting note in the *Life* (i. p. 195) explains the origin of the metaphor. "When I went by the first train from Liverpool to Manchester (1830), I thought that the wheels ran in a groove. It was a black night and there was such a vast crowd round the train at the station that we could not see the wheels. Then I made this line."

183. He thinks of the earth as a wheel spinning along on its orbit. At night the earth is between us and the sun.

184. a cycle of Cathay, a whole millennium of the stationary civilisation of China. The awakening of China in the twentieth century was not, of course, foreseen when these words were written.

185. Mother-Age. Cp. l. 108 and also ll. 11-16.

for mine I knew not, for I knew no mother of my own.  
Cp. l. 156.

186. "Triumph over nature by works of engineering, by the telegraph, and by the discoveries of science."

- 190. roof-tree, the main beam of the roof.
- 191.holt, wood.
- 192. Cramming, driving.

## XV. GODIVA.

COVENTRY'S 'ancient legend' is told of the wife of Leofric, earl of Mercia in the eleventh century.

6. in the flying of a wheel, proud of the invention of railways.  
See note on XIV. 182.

43. the wedded eagles, the two eagles of the clasp.

66. compact of, made of.

67. The fatal byword, doomed to be remembered as 'Peeping Tom.'

74. shameless noon. Observe the force and beauty of the unexpected epithet.

## XVI. THE DAY-DREAM.

THIS version of the familiar fairy-tale of 'the Sleeping Beauty' is supposed to be related to 'Lady Flora' as she works in the drawing-room at her embroidery. The poem itself may well be likened to a piece of embroidery in which the poet has elaborated with delicate skill and threads of varied hues the quaint outline of an old-world story.

3. damask, rosy-pink, like the Damascus rose.

11. reflex, reflection.

16. Macaw, a bird of the parrot tribe, with long tail feathers. Birds of bright plumage were naturally favourite subjects for embroidery-designs.

20. order'd words. Cp. XI. 21, 'measured words.'

51. Oriel, a large projecting window forming a recess inside.

55. prisms, here used for the colours into which a ray of light is broken by passing through a prism of glass.

85. coverlid, coverlet.

91. inform, imbue, fill.

103. in sequel, in that which it brings about. Cp. II. 14.

126. The Magic Music. "A reference to the game, now almost forgotten, in which something was hidden, and those who were looking for it were guided in their search by music played more or less loudly. The fairy prince's own heart supplies him with guidance instead of music" (George and Hadow).

157. 'Pardy,' an oath, *par Dieu*.

186. creseent-bark. "The new moon seems to ride like a boat attached to a buoy upon the sea of clouds" (George and Hadow).

221. terms, periods.

227-8. Cp. *Locksley Hall* (xiv.), 128.

229. Titanic, gigantic.

231-2. The converse of Bacon's famous saying: *Antiquitas sæculi juvenus mundi*, "the ancient times were the world's youth." Bacon was protesting against the reverence paid to the authority of the ancients in science, and pointing out that in knowledge the ancients were 'young' men, the moderns 'old.'

235. quinquenniads, periods of five years, as *decads* are periods of ten years.

236. quintessence, the most essential part.

280. either, both the earnest and the sport.

## XVII. AMPHION.

THE metre is that of the popular song, *The Vicar of Bray*. It gets its somewhat rollicking effect—which is quite appropriate to the speaker's mood—from the trochaic endings of the alternate lines and such half-humorous rhymes as 'hornpipes' and 'forlorn pipes.'

10. *Amphion*. In Greek mythology a son of Zeus, to the music of whose lyre the stones moved into their places so as to form the walls of Thebes. Cp. the legend of the building of Troy referred to in *Tithonus* (xiii.), 63.

64. seirrhous, hard, knotty.

## XVIII. ST. AGNES' EVE.

ST. AGNES is the patron-saint of purity; her day is January 21st. Tennyson uses the snow appropriate to this mid-winter date to typify perfect purity of soul.

14. To, compared with.

16. argent round, the silver moon.

34. One sabbath. "There shall be no night there," *Revelation*, xxi. 2-5.

36. bride, St. Agnes herself.

## XIX. SIR GALAHAD.

ANOTHER study from the Arthurian legends: see introductory note to *Morte d'Arthur* (ii.). Tennyson was to work out the conception of Sir Galahad, called from his purity 'the Maiden

Knight,' more fully in later years in *The Holy Grail*. But he never surpassed the beauty of this early poem, the clear ringing tones of which seem of themselves to suggest the glad confidence that purity of heart and a conscience without reproach alone can give.

Observe the effect of the extra rhyme in l. 11 of each stanza in quickening the pace of the metre.

1. casques, helmets.

6. brands, swords.

9. Hsts. See note on II. 224; clanging, ep. 'ringing plains,' XII. 17.

21. More bounteous aspects, the looks of angels; ep. II. 41-48.

25. "When the crescent moon sets amid storms."

42. the holy Grail, the Sangreal, the cup from which our Lord drank at the last supper with His disciples. All Arthur's Knights went in quest of the vision of this cup, but Sir Galahad alone found it.

82. pale, enclosure.

## XXI. WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

"'THE plump head-waiter of The Cock' by Temple Bar, famous for chop and porter, was rather offended when told of the poem. 'Had Mr. Tennyson dined oftener there, he would not have minded it so much' he said."—Edward FitzGerald quoted in *Tennyson's Life*, i. 184.

8. "In Portugal in the old classical days."

39. a vinous mist, a cloud of wine.

42. Unboding, not anticipating.

44. public men, men who, like poets, give their life-work to the public. Tennyson wrote with some feeling of their 'want of pence,' for his own marriage was delayed for many years from this cause.

61. raffs, riff-raff, worthless persons.

74. "Half-stupefied (bemused) or ready to reel."

80. peptics, digestive organs.

88. convolution, winding motion (of the wheel within the head).

101. when classic Canning died, in 1827. Canning, the statesman, is called 'classic' because of his stately eloquence.

119. Ganymede, the cup-bearer of the ancient gods, a beautiful boy who was carried away to heaven from Mount Ida by an eagle. Tennyson imagines that the Cock (the sign of the inn)

had similarly carried the waiter off in his youth and set him down in the tavern.

132. knuckled at the taw, played a street-game with marbles.

137. thorpe, hamlet.

185. thou, 'my pleasant hour.'

195. little books that would be written about him.

197-200. "But, with his great heart warmed by sherry, he shot out sayings at random, before the present times, with their love of notable sayings, swarmed upon him like leeches sucking his blood for speeches to be recorded."

ana, a word for collections of sayings or anecdotes of famous men, formed from the quasi-Latin termination given to such collections, e.g. *Johnsoniana*.

220. among the pots. See *Psalm* lxviii. 13.

223. The old-fashioned chop-house was always divided into separate compartments or boxes.

235. The wrinkles that old age brings round the outer corners of the eyes are known as 'crow's feet.'

## XXIV. THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

'BURLEIGH-HOUSE by Stamford-town,' on the borders of Rutland and Lincolnshire, is the country mansion of the Marquis of Exeter, the descendant of the famous Cecil, Lord Burleigh, who was secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth. Visitors to the house are shown the portrait of a former Countess of whom this story is told.

## XXV. THE VOYAGE.

THIS is an allegory of the voyage of life—the never-ceasing pursuit of the Ideal. The Ideal—whether it be Fancy, vague but 'golden,' Knowledge, Virtue, the religious mystic's Hope of Heaven, or peaceful Liberty, the ideal of the social reformer—is never realised on earth. But only the cynic derides the quest, and he is punished for his want of faith by the despair that drives him to suicide.

The allegory is brightened by some of those tropical pictures that Tennyson loved to paint. We have already met with such scenes in *Locksley Hall*, and they are found again in *The Voyage of Maeldune*. One or two lines recall Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*.

12. sheer'd, made way through, ran as close to as possible.

19. Cp. "like a lane of beams athwart the sea," XI. 50.

20. pillar'd light, the vertical rays thrown upwards by the sun after he has disappeared below the horizon.

21. How oft (we saw).

31. "Looking in the midst of her halo like a silver boss in the centre of a dark shield."

41-44. A description of volcanoes. Gloom'd is here transitive, "made gloomy with rain of ashes that spread in clouds shaped like feathers or dark pine-trees."

45. steaming flats, 'low lands, exhaling vapours' (Rowe and Webb).

52. Phosphorescent light visible in the ship's track.

53. a carven craft, the canoe of the South Sea islanders.

71. the bloodless point reversed, "with its point unstained by blood and turned downwards, in token that it had not been and was not to be used. The freedom held out by the Vision is one to be gained not by sudden revolution or violent war, but by gradual and peaceful progress" (Rowe and Webb).

81. "We would not admit that anything was impossible."

86. those, those blasts. They came not from external circumstances, but from the invincible energy within a man.

87. heart of peace, the dead calm at the centre of a cyclonic storm.

88. the counter gale. "The winds at two opposite points on the circumference of a cyclone blow from diametrically opposite quarters: thus a ship, having passed through the centre, before emerging from such a storm meets with a gale 'counter' to that met with on entering the storm" (Rowe and Webb).

## XXVI. SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE.

This fragment deals with the Arthurian legend *pictorially*, as William Morris and Swinburne afterwards dealt with it in their poetry and the Pre-Raphaelites in their paintings, and without any thought of an *ethical* meaning. See introductory note to II.

12. sparrowhawk, sparrowhawk.

15. yellowing, taking a yellowish tinge from the soil brought down by the rains in spring.

## XXVII. A FAREWELL.

WRITTEN at Somersby in Lincolnshire, the home of the poet's boyhood.

## XXIX. THE EAGLE.

3. the azure world, the blue air.

4. wrinkled. The epithet wonderfully describes the appearance of a calm, slowly moving sea seen from a great height.

## XXXI. "COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD."

THE forsaken lover, weary of life, desires only the rest of the grave. He asks his old love—whom he addresses with a forgiving tenderness as "Child"—to refrain from vexing him with useless pity.

The short monosyllabic concluding line of each stanza has a "dying fall" that is a very subtle triumph of the poet's art.

9. Time, life.

## XXXII. THE LETTERS.

2. gloom'd, darkened, as in xxv. 41, "Gloom'd the low coast."

46. swells, swellings, mounds.

## XXXIII. THE VISION OF SIN.

AN allegory of the punishment that overtakes a life of sensual indulgence. The "house with wings" typifies imagination, already overweighted by the flesh: "his heavy rider kept him down." The youth is led into a palace by "a child of sin," and gives himself up to the pleasures of the senses (stanza 2). In stanza 3 the "awful rose of dawn" seems to figure approaching judgment: it is "unheeded," and the heavy vapour that gradually dulls the senses and destroys the keenness of their pleasure is unheeded too. The "gray and gap-tooth'd man," who is the speaker in stanza 4, is the same youth grown old in sin. He has been punished by the ever-growing dullness of the senses that he had indulged (ll. 213-4) and by the misery of his own cynicism (ll. 215-6). "Is there any hope?" If there is, it lies in the fact that he still has "a little grain of conscience," revealed in his uneasy attempts to defend his own life and asperse the lives of others (l. 218), and in the mercy of God (l. 222), which may yet save him from the last doom of the brute beast—to be "pierced with worms" and to "quicken into lower forms" of life (l. 210). The poem may have been suggested by Shelley's *Triumph of Life*, which it resembles in some of its imagery.

57. Mine, my dream.

104. the schools, the universities.

135. her, Freedom.



144. conduit, the open street-gutter running with the blood of civil strife.

149. the public fool, the foolish mob.

171-190. The dance of Death.

179. Vivat Rex! Long live the king!

189. Buss, kiss.

201. maudlin gall, drunken bitterness.

#### XXXIV. TO —

20. The many-headed beast. Plato's name for the democracy.

24. blazon'd, adorned with 'pomp of heraldry.' Cp. vi. 68. There is the further notion of 'celebrated,' 'published abroad.'

#### XXXV. TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE.

'E. L.' was Edmund Lushington, who married Tennyson's sister. The metre is that used in *In Memoriam*, but the effect here is quite different.

2. Peneian pass, the pass of the river Peneus in Thessaly.

4. Akrokeraunian walls, a mountain range along the coast of N.W. Greece, nearly opposite Corfu.

5. Tomohrit (Tomor), a mountain in Albania.

Athos, a mountain in N.E. Greece, famous for its twenty large monasteries, dating from the Byzantine period.

#### XXXVI. "BREAK, BREAK, BREAK."

THIS lyric—one of the most exquisite in the English language—was "made in a Lincolnshire lane at 5 o'clock in the morning between blossoming hedges" (*Life*, i. 190); but the imagined scene seems to be Clevedon, a little watering-place on the Bristol Channel, where Arthur Hallam, the poet's friend, lies buried.

#### XXXVII. THE POET'S SONG.

SHELLEY envies the skylark's joy in the present, because "Man looks before and after And pines for what is not"; but Tennyson finds the poet's song better than the nightingale's, because the poet can look forward to the widening of man's thoughts by "the process of the suns" (xiv. 138) and the greater gladness of "the golden year" (xi.) that is yet to be.

## A NOTE ON METRE.

A KNOWLEDGE of the laws of metre is a great help to our enjoyment of poetry, and it is not difficult to learn at least the elements of metrical rules.

The names of the 'feet' or recurring combinations of syllables chiefly used in English verse are these :

*Iambus* (— —), a short syllable followed by a long, *i.e.* an unaccented syllable followed by an accented (').

*Trochee* (— —), a long syllable followed by a short, *i.e.* an accented syllable followed by an unaccented.

*Anapaest* (— — —), two short or unaccented syllables followed by one long or accented syllable.

*Spondee* (— —), two long or accented syllables.

*Dactyl* (— — —), a long or accented syllable followed by two short or unaccented syllables.

*Example of Iambic rhythm :*

The wóods | decáy, | the wóods | decáy | and fáll.

*Examples of Trochaic rhythm :*

In her | eár he | whísper | gáily,

If my | heárt by | sígn | can | téll.

(The last foot of a line is often shortened to a single syllable as in the second line of the above example.)

Cómrades, | léave me | hére a | little, || w híle as | yét 'tis | eárlý |  
mórn.

Léave me | hére and | w hén you | wánt me || soúnd up | ón the |  
búgle- | hórn.

(The break in the middle of these long lines is technically called *Caesura*.)

*Example of Anapaestic rhythm :*

The swál | low stópt | as he hún | ted the bée.

(Here the first two feet are iambi, the last two are anapaests. A poem is seldom composed entirely in anapaests. Their chief use, as here, is as a variation from the iambus.)

*Example of Spondaic rhythm :*

Thē lōng | dāy wānēs : | thē slōw | mōon clīmb : | thē dēep.

(No poem is composed entirely in spondees, because it would be impossible to lay stress on every syllable in a poem. Indeed this foot is very rare : but it can be used very effectively, as here, to give the idea of slow movement.)

*Example of Dactylic rhythm :*

Dásh'd to | géther in | blinding | dew.

(Just as the anapaest is chiefly used by way of variation from the iambus, so the dactyl is chiefly used, as in the second foot of the above example, by way of variation from the trochee.)

The above examples will help a student to scan most of the verses in this book, especially if he will bear in mind the following cautions :

(1) It is sometimes possible to scan a line correctly in two ways. In deciding which is the better way to scan it, we must be guided by the general rhythm of the poem. Thus, "In dáy|s of old | Amphi | on" (iambic) might be scanned "In | dáy|s of | old Am | phion" (trochaic) : the fact that the rhythm of the alternate line of the couplet is unquestionably iambic proves that this line should be regarded as iambic too, in spite of the trochaic effect of the ending.

(2) The sense-accent often differs from the verse-accent. Indeed the subtler melodies of all poetry depend on the presence in the verse of two distinct rhythms, which we may call the rhythms of the sense-accent and the verse-accent. This fact is seldom understood, though we nearly all act upon it in reading blank verse. We scan the first line of Mark Antony's speech in *Julius Caesar* as an iambic line of five accents :

Friends, Rómans, cóintrymén, lend mé your éars

But we read it :

Friends, Rómans, cóuntrymen, lénd me yonr éars.

The musical quality of a verse can never be fully enjoyed till we read with an appreciation, conscious or instinctive, of the twofold rhythm, the sense-rhythm being dominant while the verse-rhythm runs on in a rippling undertone, a just audible but essential musical accompaniment.

(3) A poet may seek an exceptional effect by a deliberate irregularity. Thus in XXXVI. 1, "Break, break, break," though only three syllables, is a line of three feet, and is meant to be pronounced very slowly, with pauses between the syllables, so that its reading should occupy as much time as the corresponding line in stanza 2,

O wéll | for the fish | erman's bóy.

## DATES IN TENNYSON'S LIFE.

1809. Aug. 6. Born at Somersby Rectory, Lincolnshire.  
1828. Went to Trinity College, Cambridge.  
1830. *Poems chiefly Lyrical*.  
1833. *Poems*. [The first version of *The Lady of Shalott*,  
*Oenone*, *Palace of Art*, etc.]  
A. H. Hallam died.  
1842. *Poems*, in two vols. [The two series of poems now  
known as *The Lady of Shalott and Other Poems* and *English  
Idylls and Other Poems*.]  
1850. Married.  
Succeeded Wordsworth as Poet Laureate.  
*In Memoriam*.  
1859. *Idylls of the King* (afterwards much enlarged).  
1884. Became a peer.  
1892. Oct. 6. Died at Aldworth, near Haslemere, Surrey.

## BOOKS RECOMMENDED TO STUDENTS.

*Alfred, Lord Tennyson: a Memoir*. By his son, Hallam, Lord Tennyson. 2 vols. (Also an edition in one vol.) Macmillan.

*Tennyson*. By Sir Alfred Lyall. English Men of Letters Series. Macmillan.

*Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life*. By Stopford A. Brooke. Isbister. 1894.

*Illustrations of Tennyson*. By J. Churton Collins. Chatto and Windus. 1891. (Many parallels quoted from Greek and Latin poets.)

Useful notes on some of the poems in this volume will be found in *Selections from Tennyson*, by F. J. Rowe and W. T. Webb. Macmillan; and *Select Poems of Tennyson*, by H. B. George and W. H. Hadow. Macmillan.



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